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ABSTRACT

This publication on the subject of Catholic intellectual excellence at the university level reproduces six papers from an annual meeting and four papers on John Henry Cardinal Newman in celebration of the 100th anniversary of his death in 1890. The papers on Newman include the following: "Newman's Idea of a University: Is It Viable Today?" (E. J. Miller); "The Newman-Lonergan Connection: Implications for Doing Theology in North America" (C. M. Streeter); "Newman and 'The Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian'" (G. Magill); "Cardinal Newman: A Study in Integrity" (J. R. Quinn); and "Faculty Address" (J. L. Heft). The annual meeting papers include: "The Catholic Imagination and The Catholic University" (A. M. Greeley); "The Church and its Responsibility to Foster Knowledge" (M. J. Buckley); "How is Intellectual Excellence in Philosophy to be Understood by a Catholic Philosopher? What has Philosophy to Contribute to Catholic Intellectual Excellence?" (A. MacIntyre); "Catholic Intellectual Excellence: Science and Technology" (A. B. Hayes); "Theological Excellence in the Catholic University" (M. Collins); and "Response Upon Reception of the 1991 Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, CSC, Award" (W. J. Ong). (JB)

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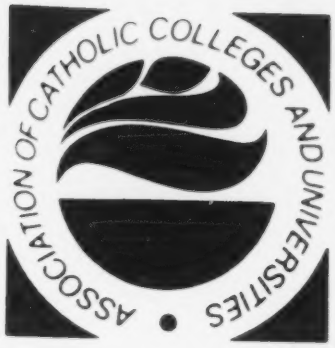


## Catholic Intellectual Excellence: Challenges and Visions

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# INTRODUCTION

On August 11, 1990, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the death of John Henry Cardinal Newman. This event could not go unnoticed in the halls of academe. For Newman was not only an outstanding churchman, a convert of tremendous significance, but also a firm believer in the life of the mind and its relationship to the life of the spirit. His discourses on the purposes of a Catholic university, contained in *The Idea of a University*, have been a reference point for thousands of commencement speakers and eminent Catholic writers.

Several Catholic universities took note of this occasion by sponsoring symposia dealing with various aspects of Newman's thought and writings. In order to share some of the wealth that came to the surface during these events, we have chosen in this issue to publish three papers given at the symposium at St. Louis University, those by Rev. Gerard Magill, Dr. Edward Miller, and Carla Mae Streeter, OP. In addition, we are reprinting Archbishop John Quinn's presentation at a symposium at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles entitled, "Cardinal Newman: A Study of Integrity," and an address to the faculty of the University of Dayton by Rev. James L. Heft.

The continued inspiration given by Newman to all those engaged in the work of Catholic higher education was manifested in the choice of a theme for our annual meeting in 1991. Leaders in our institutions who have been exploring in depth the basis of their "Catholic identity" over the past twenty years found it useful once again to focus on the central mission of the university, Catholic intellectual excellence. To lead them in the discussion, they invited Rev. Andrew Greeley, who focused on the Catholic imagination as crucial to a true Catholic intellectual life, and Rev. Michael Buckley, SJ, who sought to lay a foundation for understanding the relationship between faith and culture, with particular emphasis on the scientific aspects of contemporary culture. Attention was given to specific disciplines the following morning by Alasdair MacIntyre (philosophy), Mary Collins, OSB (religious studies and theology) and Alice Hayes (the sciences). The conclusion one would have to draw is that interdisciplinary studies and/or faculty discussions are essential if we are to make our universities places of vibrant intellectual life. Such interdisciplinary conversations presuppose, however, solid grounding in a discipline, and thus the adequacy of the preparation of students for college or university study is so very important. Although many of the phrases we use to speak of the meaning of "Catholic" when it modifies the noun "university" are descriptive of values that we believe our tradition adds to the intellectual life, we are never satisfied that our articulation equals the reality. Often we settle for the values we consider characteristic of the environment on our campus, e.g., attention to each person, fairness, respect for others, compassion. While these are admirable human and Christian values, they are not peculiar to the academic world. The role we must seek to carry out precisely because we are Catholic universities is well expressed in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*:

> Through the encounter which it establishes between the unfathomable richness of the salvific message of the Gospel and the variety and immensity of the fields of knowledge in which that richness is incarnated by it, a Catholic university enables the church to institute an incomparably fertile dialogue with people of every culture .... In the world today, characterized by such rapid developments in science and technology, the tasks of a Catholic university assume an ever greater importance and urgency. Scientific and technological discoveries create an enormous economic and industrial growth, but they also inescapably require the correspondingly necessary search for meaning, in order to guarantee that the new discoveries be used for the authentic good of individuals and of human society as a whole. If it is the responsibility of every university to search for such meaning, a Catholic university is called in a particular way to respond to this need; its Christian inspiration enables it to include the moral, spiritual, and religious dimension in its research, and to evaluate the attainments of science and technology in the perspective of the totality of the human person.

Alice Gallin, OSU
*Executive Director*

# Newman's Idea of a University: Is it Viable Today?

Edward J. Miller

To consider fully Cardinal Newman's views on education is to contemplate nearly everything he wrote and did, for it was he who said of himself, "from first to last, education, in this large sense of the word, has been my line."[1] To assess the contemporary situation of colleges and universities is to undertake a practically endless effort, all of which is compounded by the constraints of a limited essay. To attempt too much will ensure that nothing is done well, and to select issues will invite overlooked aspects. I must chance the latter, however, with the conviction that Newman's educational philosophy has important views to contribute to some contemporary questions about our universities, while to other current issues it is surely dated.

Two recent discussions on university education invite a particular selection of topics in examining Newman anew. These discussions bore on the nature of Catholic colleges and universities and on the nature of liberal arts higher education. On August 15, 1990, Pope John Paul II issued his apostolic constitution on Catholic universities, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, a document whose prior drafts engaged many Catholic educators during the previous decade. During that same decade, William Bennett, first as chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities and later as secretary of education, challenged the American university community to reexamine its undergraduate core curriculum, having been convinced that rightful disciplinary content and curricular cohesion in the liberal arts had been abandoned by most undergraduate institutions.[2]

In examining these questions three theses shall emerge, and an advanced view of them is helpful. They are as follows: (1) A discussion examining truth takes a different direction than if the discussion proceeded on knowledge, and here are to be situated the pope and the cardinal; (2) A discussion about academic content concludes differently than if it were based on process, and here one finds William Bennett and John Henry Newman; (3) Newman himself is best understood when his penchant for dialectics is appreciated.

*Dr. Miller is dean of the graduate school at the College of New Rochelle.*

Let us first turn to Newman's thoughts on university education, with some brief background about their historical context and about the primary materials themselves. In 1845 the British government established the non-denominational Queen's University in Ireland to provide an alternative to the Anglican-based Trinity College Dublin, opening college campuses in Belfast, Cork, and Galway. (In the Roman Catholic parlance of that day, both the Queens Colleges and Trinity College itself were considered "mixed" education, for Catholic youth would mix with non-Catholics in attending them.) Under pressure from the Vatican, the Irish bishops at the Synod of Thurles (1850) prohibited involvement of Catholics at Queens colleges, though some Irish bishops had been favorably disposed to them because they were non-sectarian. The Vatican enjoined the bishops to establish a Catholic university in Ireland, modelled on Louvain, and a funding drive was begun by Archbishop Cullen in 1851. Cullen, who first met Newman in Rome in 1847 while Newman was preparing for ordination, wrote him in April, 1851, to invite him to lecture on education—to lecture in Dublin "against Mixed Education" as Newman observed in his journal.[3] In a subsequent personal visit to Newman during the summer, Cullen offered him the rectorship of the new university, which Newman later and somewhat hesitantly accepted.[4]

Newman first conceived a trilogy of lectures, but the scheme grew into five public lectures, which he offered in the spring of 1852.[5] Later that summer and autumn in Birmingham, Newman wrote five more discourses, and these ten discourses were published at year's end as *Discourses on the Scope and Nature of University Education. Addressed to the Catholics of Dublin.*[6] After Newman was formally installed as rector on June 4, 1854, he gave occasional lectures at the university over the next four years. These lectures as well as some articles he wrote for the school newspaper, *The Catholic University Gazette*, were brought together as "Lectures and Essays on University Subjects" and published as a companion volume to a 1859 edition of those 1852 discourses; Newman deleted his original fifth discourse since he feared it went against the thinking of the pope.[7] In 1873 he

brought both segments into one volume, calling it *The Idea of a University Defined and Illustrated*. Minor changes were made up until his last edition of 1889, and this is the text now known as *Idea*.

Newman wrote other essays for that university newspaper which are often overlooked by investigators, yet they are very important for concretely illustrating his conception of a university. He published these articles in 1856 under the title of *Office and Work of Universities*, and they are now tucked away in the third volume of his *Historical Sketches*. In addition to all these "textual materials" one needs to be aware of Newman's pertinent correspondence and of various memoranda he wrote about the Dublin university venture.[8]

What aim lay behind these educational writings? There is no single fundamental objective. Newman had different audiences and goals in mind, and this fact invites confusion as he moves, both rhetorically and argumentatively, between goals. For example, many claim somewhat too facilely that Newman wanted fundamentally to justify the place of theology in the curriculum. That goal, I am convinced, was a secondary preoccupation. Newman surely had a primary concern to urge the value of Catholic education, "unmixed education" as he called it, since some of the Irish bishops and many of the laity saw no harm in the secularized Queens colleges. Theology was to have its rightful and necessary place, as a discipline among disciplines, but more overarching was to be the "idea" which makes an institution to be a genuine university; this idea was possible, indeed strengthened in Newman's view, within a Catholic institution if the rights of the institution and the church were mutually respected by each other. Furthermore, as shall be seen, other aims engaged Newman's energies.

What about those laity, those potential professors and students without whom the new university would not march? In *Historical Sketches* there is a curious discussion of public opinion which Newman calls the "main adversary" to the new enterprise. The university, he says, "has to force its way abruptly into an existing state of society which has never duly felt its absence," and it butts against a "reluctant or perplexed public opinion."[9] Somewhat later, in describing the zeal and courage of Irish people, "springing fresh and vigorous from the sepulchre of famine" and religious oppression, "it sets me marvelling," he noted, "to find some of those very men, who have been heroically achieving impossibilities all their lives long, now beginning to scruple about adding one little sneaking impossibility to the list."[10] As is known, save for the medical school the university venture failed, and one failure was its inability to recruit sufficient students.

Another major aim was to justify university education in the Oxford mode, that is to say, the cultivation of intellect vis-a-vis whatever is knowable. In one sense the first eight discourse of *Idea* recapitulate the turn-of-the-century argument between Oxford and the "Edinburgh party,"[11] answering the latter's charges that (1) religion is not a suitable intellectual endeavor since religion at best is a matter of private opinions and (2) the only knowledge that matters serves the commonweal and is practically oriented; the liberal arts are simply not useful. I believe Newman used these discourses to state the Oxford case in his words, and along the way sufficiently distancing himself from those aspects of Oxford, then and now, which troubled him.

One of those troubling matters was not developed in *Idea* but came under sustained treatment in *Historical Sketches*. It was the college or tutorial system in contrast to the professorial or university system. In Newman's view, the German schools educated through university professors without benefit of college residence; Oxford/Cambridge education was in the main sequestered into resident colleges, the university itself having an impotent structure. The professor/college contrast, or the metaphors Athens/Rome that Newman develops at length in these essays as illustrative of the contrast, are meant to describe the tension between freedom and regulation, inquiry and structure, in the education of students. After ably describing their characters and their competing aims, Newman's option is for both, if they are allowed to interact dialectically. To this important feature of dialectics I shall return.

In the preface to the discourses in *Idea* Newman states his thesis that a university "is a place of *teaching* universal *knowledge*."[12] After eight of those discourses he flatly states that everything to this point has been considering a university per se, not a university as Catholic. The latter is treated in the ninth discourse. For the moment, however, I wish to note the linchpin of every other discourse in *Idea*. It is his supple use of the word "knowledge."

To sense his own struggle with the word and its correct notion, he uses other terms at times though they are not quite synonymous. It is mental cultivation, it is *enlargement*, it is *philosophy*.[13] To speak in Thomistic categories, Newman strains to describe the perfection of a habit, as for example *virtue* is the word to describe the perfected habit of doing good, and *health* describes somatic well-being. He wishes to describe a cultivated mental excellence, and at one point in the second half of *Idea* he calls it "the philosophy of an imperial intellect."[14] Furthermore, and again to speak Thomistically, he uses the word *knowledge* materially and formally depending upon his aim at the moment. Knowledge, materially, refers to what is being known, and thus Newman will argue that no branch of knowledge, no academic discipline as it were, can be a priori excluded from the curriculum. Knowledge, formally, refers to the mental capacity by which what is known is properly known. It is the capacity to discriminate facts and ideas, to order them, to perceive relations between them, and ultimately to judge them and act upon them. In this respect, perhaps, Newman's greatest commentator is

Bernard Lonergan if one can sense this impress of Newman's educational psychology within the chapters of Lonergan's *Insight*.[15]

A reader of *Idea* might well object: Newman has much to say about theology, indeed about Catholic theology, in those first eight discourses, and therefore he has much therein that would affirm what constitutes a university as Catholic. I stand my ground. Every discipline, even theology, is subsumed under the more important discussion of what constitutes knowledge, both in its material and formal sense.[16] In these discourses theology needs to be justified as an academic subject as does any other subject, and Newman argues its justification on the non-dogmatic grounds of educational philosophy, not on the imperatives of revelation or magisterium nor on the precisely Catholic nature of the university as such.

As already noted, Newman began the discourses with the flat statement that a university is a place of teaching universal knowledge. He emphasized teaching in order to assert two matters: (1) The university is an intellectual service to students, not a moral or indoctrinating enterprise as might occur in a seminary; (2) It is a pedagogical enterprise and not per se a research endeavor. In Newman's day there were academies and royal societies whose business it was to extend the frontiers of knowledge, and he noted the quandary which obfuscates many contemporary tenure discussions: "to discover and to teach are . . . distinct gifts, and are not commonly found united in the same person."[17] Teaching, in other words, involves students in its very notion, and having asserted only this much in the opening pages of *Idea*, he leaves aside until the essays in *Historical Sketches* the fuller discussion of what he terms the "professorial system" to describe teaching. The remainder of *Idea* focuses on that illusive word, *knowledge*.

The notion of knowledge is described variously. From one angle it is the very aim of the university, and in this the steadiness, the comprehensiveness and the versatility of intellect," and having "a connected view or grasp of things, which allows entry into a subject with comparative ease."[18] All such depictions of knowledge refer not to the accumulation of facts and ideas but rather to the digestion of such things and the making of them into a pattern or ordered configuration, into what may simply be called a view. If we today are inclined to term someone possessed of many facts and ideas a knowledgeable person, Newman is rather thinking of what we would term an insightful person.

Care need be taken of Newman's use of the word *view*. There is a spurious knowledge he termed "viewiness" which he thought a chief evil of his day. "An intellectual man, as the world now conceives of him, is one who is full of 'views' on all subjects . . . of the day. It is almost thought a disgrace not to have a view at a moment's notice on any question." Periodical literature catered to this tendency, in Newman's opinion, and it served up superficial knowledge for genuine knowledge. He called such viewiness "nutshell truths for the breakfast table."[19]

The genuine knowledge which university education engenders, and which Newman at times simply calls "philosophy,"[20] is an active and formative power of the mind that reduces to order and meaning the sundry things one learns. He likens it to arriving at a center of thought or to "first principles," such first principles being practically a signature of Newmanian thinking.[21] In the essay, "Discipline of Mind," he writes: "The result is a formation of mind—that is, a habit of order and system, a habit of referring every accession of knowledge to what we already know, and of adjusting the one with the other; and, moreover, as such a habit implies, the actual acceptance and use of certain principles as centres of thought, around which our knowledge grows and is located. Where this critical faculty exists, history is no longer a mere storybook, or biography a romance; orators and publications of the day are no longer infallible authorities; eloquent diction is no longer a substitute for matter, nor bold statements, or lively descriptions, a substitute for proof."[22] Newman draws an analogy with a blind person to whom sight miraculously returns and into whom pours a confusing world of colors, lines, hues and shapes, without drift or meaning and "like the wrong side of a piece of tapestry or carpet."[23] Only by degrees and through trial and error does that person arrive at ordered and meaningful perceptions. In similar fashion also must the arduous task of intellectual cultivation proceed.

Some implications follow from this vision of knowledge as centered thought or philosophy. The individual mind cannot grasp the whole at once; it progresses by grasping aspects of the whole and arranging those aspects into ever more fundamental views which approach the understanding of the whole in itself. Discourse Three transposes this personal mental law to the communal mind of a university and portrays the aspects of the universal knowledge as the disciplines: history, physics, theology, etc. Secondly, to ignore an aspect (i.e., a discipline) leads to deficient knowledge, much as if Newman's man-born-blind chose to ignore a particular color in describing a rainbow, and here of course is situated Newman's famous argument for the necessity of including theology in a university's purview. One cannot understand the total universe without reference to its Creator any more than one can view a muscle and call it an explanation of motion without considering free will. Indeed, the a priori exclusion of any discipline invites not only deficient knowledge but, more alarmingly to Newman, erroneous pontification, for wherever there is an excluded discipline, other disciplines will encroach on its land and opine on its issues from their own inadequate first principles.[24] The psychologist will play the ethicist, the physicist will play the theologian of nature.

A third implication follows which is particularly germane to the discussion involving Pope John Paul II. The knowledge of which Newman speaks, and which is described in terms of moving ever closer to centers of thought, is of its very nature a progressive coming to know. It is not ready made insight; it is not without false steps; and there are not to be sanitized topics for the sake of "pious ears." Of the latter, one recalls Newman's famous statement that "it is a contradiction in terms to attempt a sinless literature of sinful man."[25] Such knowledge, whether considered formally as a mental habit to be attained, or considered materially as subject matter, enjoys within the university context the freedom to be wrong, if I may so put it. Newman did not wish erroneous knowledge to be sure, but he wished the free play of ideas to have elbow room in the interest of getting at truth. "It is the very law of the human mind in its inquiry . . . to make its advances by a process which . . . is circuitous. There are no shortcuts to knowledge . . . . In scientific researches error may be said, without paradox, to be in some instances the way to truth, and the only way."[26] Such faith in the merits of open and free inquiry, I am arguing, is best provided for by setting up the discussion on the word *knowledge* rather than *truth*, which is what Newman did.

Note some of the things he had to say. In *Historical Sketches* the university "is the place to which a thousand schools make contribution; in which the intellect may safely range and speculate, sure to find its equal in some antagonist activity, and its judge in the tribunal of truth. It is a place where inquiry is pushed forward, and rashness rendered innocuous, and error exposed, by the collision of mind with mind, and knowledge with knowledge."[27] Is one to fear this collision of knowledge with knowledge? In describing the "imperial intellect," hear him again: "If he [the true university person] has one cardinal maxim in his philosophy, it is that truth cannot be contrary to truth; if he has a second, it is that truth often seems contrary to truth; and, if a third, it is the practical conclusion, that we must be patient with such appearances, and not be hasty to pronounce them to be really of a more formidable character."[28] Furthermore, for Newman, if there is any academic discipline which from its sovereign position ought to bear calmly the collision of knowledge with knowledge, it is theology. For he says that an objection posed to Christian faith could (1) be not proven in the end, (2) turn out not to be contradictory, or (3) not be contradictory to anything really revealed. Yet, if at this moment it appears contradictory, then one "should be content to wait, knowing that error is like other delinquents; give it rope enough, and it will be found to have a strong suicidal propensity."[29]

Language such as this would emerge only awkwardly in a schema based on *veritas* where the focus is not on the process but on the end result. Newman's language is more readily consonant with the contemporary notion of the academy and the guidelines of academic freedom. Such a supply and confident use of the word *knowledge* provides the necessary elbow room for university endeavors, a phrase indeed which Newman in other situations calls upon.[30]

Mention must be made of Discourse Nine which describes the church's role in a Catholic university, although the leitmotif remains knowledge; the "duties of the Church towards knowledge" is the discourse's title. Having earlier argued that the completeness of academic inquiry requires theology's contribution, Newman here addresses the de facto tendency of human inquiry on rationalistic principles alone "to measure and proportion [revelation] by an earthly standards . . . to tune it, as it were, to a different key, and to reset its harmonies." Lest the university become a rival of the church in theological matters, the church consequently "breathes her own pure and unearthly spirit into it . . . and watches over its teaching . . . and superintends its action."[31] The church, then, has an active role to play.

It is so typical of Newman to consider matters in their existential propensities, e.g., his constant references to sinful beings such as we are, that he is sensitive to the myopias of "reason alone" in matters of revelation. The methodology of physical science urges a private-judgment view of revelation, and that of literature a natural explanation of the human condition. While these contentions are argued with greater nuance and with allowable exceptions in part two of *Idea*, they frame the contention of Discourse Nine that revelation is safeguarded by an agency greater than reason alone, which is the Holy Spirit acting through the church. It would be strange to find Newman speaking in *Idea* on this matter differently than in his other major works, e.g., *Essay on the Development of Doctrine*, where the church is the God-given teacher of the revelation in Christ.[32]

On the other hand, the question remains how the church is to superintend the functioning of the university, granting that for Newman it indeed enjoys this role. Everything he mentions of freedom of inquiry, of necessary elbow room, of giving error sufficient rope must also be taken into account, and indeed in a dialectical fashion do inquiry and authority, "Athens and Rome," come together in his scheme. One must reread the fifth chapter of Newman's *Apologia*, perhaps the most subtle of his writings, to sense the conflict between the "restless intellect" and the weight of church authority, and his dialectical, almost paradoxical, contention that they are sustained by conflict with each other. Furthermore, one must recall that he dropped his original Fifth Discourse from the 1859 edition, not because he agreed with Pius IX's position that Catholic doctrine condition every discipline to be taught in the university—he noted that his "idea" expressed there was otherwise—but because of tact; i.e., that oft-noted "principle of reserve" in his writings. Lest this interpretation seem contrived, note

this letter of 1868 to the person who succeeded him as university rector: "It is *essential* that the Church should have a living presence and control in the action of the University. But still, till the Bishops leave the University to itself, till the University governs itself, till it is able to act as a free being, it will be but a sickly child."[33]

Leaving, for the moment, Newman's thinking on the first thesis I framed at the outset, let me turn to my second thesis, viz., the question of process versus content in the educational process, the content aspect having been recently focused upon by William Bennett. In Newman's essay on "Christianity and Letters" the key question is posed: "how best to strengthen, refine, and enrich the intellectual powers"?34 The question brings together what I have been terming the material and formal aspects of knowledge, that is, what subjects beget the genuine habit of mental cultivation? Although Newman's ready answer regarding subject matter in this essay is the classics because their track record in so doing has been proven, it remained true for him that other subjects could provide that selfsame exactness and suppleness of mind if they were properly taught. In the essay "Discipline of Mind" Newman mentions various subjects that can work. "Consider what a trial of acuteness, caution, and exactness it is to master, and still more to prove, a number of definitions. Again, what an exercise in logic is classification, what an exercise in logical precision it is to understand and enunciate the proof of any of the more difficult propositions of Euclid .... And so of any other science—chemistry, or comparative anatomy, or natural history; it does not matter what it is, if it be really studied and mastered."[35]

The pedagogical process of educating students is more important than academic content itself in Newman's scheme, and for achieving the aim of a university it is key. His full analysis is lodged in the extended discussion of the "professorial system" in *Historical Sketches* where it is distinguished from the "college system." By the latter he means the structured residential life of the university (the realm of administrators, the deans, the governing polity). The distinction is examined throughout these little known writings. It is Athens compared to Rome; it is individuality compared to structure, it is freedom compared to law; it is influence compared to system. I shall return to the distinction below in view of its dialectical interplay, but first a few remarks on the professorial system itself.

Though many things are needed to constitute a university in its fullness, in essence, however, a university "is a place for the communication and circulation of thought, by means of personal intercourse."[36] While one may learn from books, "the air, the life which makes it live in us, you must catch all these from those in whom it lives already."[37] It is the ability of the professors, which Newman simply calls personal influence, that essentially achieves the aim of the university. "It is the place where the professor becomes eloquent, and is a missionary and a preacher, displaying his science in its most complete and most winning form, pouring it forth with the zeal of enthusiasm, and lighting up his own love of it in the breasts of his hearers .... It is a seat of wisdom, ... an Alma Mater of the rising generation."[38]

How would Newman's ideal professor teach? We catch a glimpse in his essay, "Elementary Subjects," in which he demonstrates how he himself would teach Greek or Latin to an undergraduate. Readers of Newman understandably jump these pages with their forbidding sections of Greek and Latin texts, yet one would perceive here how the professor prods and pushes the student to accuracy of judgment and to integration of new insight with what is previously known. The mist, as Newman says, "clears up ... and the rays of light fall back upon their centres. It is this haziness of intellectual vision which is the malady" of the current age.[39]

The Bennett debate, lately assumed by his successor at NEH, Lynne Cheney, focused on the content of the core curriculum, which in fact meant the Western cultural heritage.[40] It equated exposure to that content with genuine liberal education. While Newman is indeed bullish about much of the same material, he opts instead for the pedagogical process over the content as the effective cause of genuine education. Indeed, in Newman's vocabulary, on might even say that curricular content is a "structure" compared to the "personal influence" of the professor, and of that distinction he noted pungently, "With influence there is life, without it there is none .... An academical system without personal influence of teachers upon pupils, is an arctic winter; it will create an ice-bound, petrified, cast-iron University, and nothing else."[41] Admittedly, in this text, Newman was viewing academic residences as the structure, yet his idea holds for structured credit distributions if considered only in themselves. The act of teaching is primary in the aim of a university to educate students, and what is taught is somewhat secondary to it. Thus would I situate Newman's observations on a much later debate.

The recent apostolic constitution on Catholic universities, on its very first page, defines a Catholic university's aim as existentially uniting two seemingly antithetical orders: "the search for truth and the certainty of already knowing the font of truth."[42] The theme of truth is so central to what follows that earlier drafts of the document co-opted the university into the church's own evangelizing mission, an incorporation which if strongly pushed would have troubling consequences for academic freedom and for legitimate institutional independence.[43]

Under the press of many interventions, and notably those by American university presidents, the final document softens the connection with the church's teaching mission. It describes the university as making "an important contribution" to it and being "in harmony" with it.[44] Whereas the earlier drafts depicted a juridic bond to the local ordinary, the final document speaks only of

"close personal and pastoral relationships . . . between university and church authorities."[45] Universities, however, established by the Holy See or by an episcopal conference or by a local ordinary are obligated to incorporate into their statues the eleven articles or norms of the papal document. All other institutions are invited to internalize these norms as far as possible.

My concern, in the main, is with the ideology of the document. It proceeds on a philosophical and pastoral analysis of *truth*, not *knowledge* as Newman chose. It speaks of the formation and transmittal of a Christian culture, but this task is continually to be clarified *in lumine revelationis*.[46] The pope's extended analysis of Christian culture allows the impression that if one substituted *ecclesia* for *universitates*, one was reading *Gaudium et Spes* of Vatican Council II. Pope John Paul II is not to be faulted for so construing the topic, for he is a pastor and not a provost. But from such an orientation certain assertions logically follow, as for example the four essential characteristics of a university *qua* Catholic: *inspiratioChristiana* of individuals and institution; reflection in *lumine fidei*; *fidelitas* to the Christian message as interpreted by the magisterium; *diakonia* to the people of god and to the human family.[47] Within this context other items do not so easily fit and are certainly not mentioned: the possibility of errors in the struggle for truth, that research may seem to clash with received doctrines, that a Catholic scholar might dissent from non-infallible authoritative magisterium.[48] In a certain respect the document is a harmonious analysis of the expected harmony between faith and reason, a fundamentally Catholic principle to be sure and worthy of a university to fathom. Yet a university must seek such harmonies through academic struggle and debate whereas a pastor may assert it readily as a formal and final cause, again to speak Thomastically.

The arena of academic freedom presents the major potential difficulty for American Catholic colleges and universities in light of the pope's recent apostolic constitution. The history of a particular phrase illustrates this point. A group of American Catholic university presidents met in 1967 at Land O'Lakes, Wisconsin, in preparation for a Vatican-sponsored international meeting the following year. Their "Land O'Lakes" document reads: "To perform its teaching and research functions effectively the Catholic university must have a true autonomy and academic freedom in the face of authority of whatever kind, lay or clerical, external to the academic community itself."[49] They further say that "Catholicism is perceptibly present and effectively operative" in a Catholic university. They recognized the tension by affirming both thoughts!

An international meeting of Catholic administrators (Rome, 1972) delineated the four essential characteristics of a Catholic university, which the pope's recent constitution reiterated, but they noted that "the legitimate and necessary autonomy of the university requires that any intervention by ecclesiastical authority should respect the statues and regulations of the institution as well as accepted academic procedures,"[50] which procedures have definite meanings in the American context of academic freedom. The pope's apostolic constitution mentions necessary institutional autonomy, "so long as the rights of the individual person and of the community are preserved within the confines of the truth and the common good." This same phrase delimits the definition of academic freedom given in the footnote, and the phrase is vague enough—like its canon law cousin, *salvatis salvandis*—to mean almost anything. Some paragraphs further, the pope says that although bishops do not enter directly into the internal governance of the university, they "should be seen not as external agents but as participants" in the university's life.[51] The reference to the Land O'Lakes presidents seems evident; their phrase is fully gone.

How implementable is the pope's vision of a Catholic university in an American context of academic freedom? This question demands more extended treatment than possible here, but I would note the cautions of the American Canon Law Society regrading canons 807-814, which pertain to Catholic universities, given that the apostolic constitution on universities was written in light of those canons. The American canonical commentators write: "The Catholic institutions in the United States, in order to satisfy the nature and purpose of higher education, follow the distinctive American pattern. At the same time they remain completely free to conduct instructional and research programs in the light of Catholic faith and with the interaction of all academic disciplines. This pattern differs so greatly in style of academic governance and in cultural and social dimensions from the European system of higher education that it is seriously questionable whether the canons are indeed applicable in the United States."[52] There is undoubtedly a tension in Catholic academic settings, posed by canon law and the pope's constitution on the one hand and on the other hand by the "secular canons" on academic freedom with which American Catholic universities seek to comply for professional accreditation purposes. As with all legitimate tensions, it should never become a matter of the hegemony of one pole. It rather becomes an ongoing and never-fully-worked-out balancing of the legitimate interests of each pole, for there are values in each of them. But such balancing will involve struggle and momentary clash and prudential judgments by university president and local bishop alike.

I conclude with Newman concerning the dynamics of struggle in situations of tension. It is well known that to solve difficulties Newman tended to describe competing forces, giving each force its full and just due. As mentioned above, the *Apologia's* fifth chapter describes the ever recurring conflict between human inquiry (in religious matters) and the constraints of church

authority, citing the need for both and, moreover, the desirability for the conflict itself.[53] Again, the church's threefold offices (the devotional, the theological, and the juridic) of their nature tend to clash, yet each is sustained in its integrity by the tendencies and claims of the other two offices. Newman describes the conflicts between these three church offices in the 1877 preface to his reedition of the *Prophetical Office*, a marvelous piece of subtle writing. Newman's 1859 essay "On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine" argues for the role of the laity in witnessing to revelation, which role was meant to complement other sources of revelation, e.g., episcopal magisterium; the essay outlines the conflicts between laity and bishop during the fourth century. In these three pieces of writing, Newman was describing a process of dialectics that I have examined elsewhere in greater detail.[54] There was no other way for Newman to depict the complex realities of the tension than in this dialectical picture, and in the very dialectical process itself was not the means to the solution but the very solution itself.

Newman's dialectical penchant also operates in his vision of the university. There is, as we have seen, a collision of knowledge with knowledge, in which genuine insight may initially lurk within a wider error. The university, moreover, is a composite of inquiry and received tradition, of freedom and structure, of professor and administrator. In *Historical Sketches* he focused on the competing and at times clashing aims of university and residential college, and his answer was not to make an easy harmony of them but to describe their counterbalancing contributions. "A University embodies the principal of progress, and a College that of stability; the one is the sail, and the other the ballast; each is insufficient in itself for the pursuit, extension, and inculcation of knowledge; each is useful to the other . . . . The University being the element of advance, will fail in making good its ground as it goes; the College, from its Conservative tendencies, will be sure to go back, because it does not go forward."[55] Unlike contemporary college catalogues, Newman does not give detailed answers to how the university achieves its aims. He rather describes a dialectical process, assuming the benevolent will of the entire university community to engage one another with civility of discourse "and in a neighbourly way."[56] Were there nothing else of viability in Newman's university "idea," this last encouragement is surely such for our campus environments.

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1. *Autobiographical Writings* (referenced AW), ed. Henry Tristam (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1957), 259.

2. Pope John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Vatican City); William Bennett, *To Reclaim A Legacy* (NEH: November 1984). Bennett's general thesis is continued by his successor at NEH, Lynne V. Cheney, in *50 Hours: A Core Curriculum for College Students* (NEH: October 1989) and *Tyrannical Machines: A Report on Educational Practices Gone Wrong and Our Best Hopes for Setting Them Right* (NEH: November 1990).

3. *AW*, 280. Also, see *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman* (referenced *LD*), ed. Charles A. Dessain et al. (London and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961—), 14:257, n.2.

4. *AW*, 280-83. See *LD* 14:315 which masks the later hesitations.

5. They were delivered on May 10, 17, 24, 31 and June 7, 1852, each being published a week after delivery by a Dublin publisher. Newman clearly intended an eventual "library edition"; cf. *LD* 15:83.

6. These were actually published on Feb. 2, 1853, but backdated to the dedication date of Nov. 21, 1852, and they were henceforth known as the 1852 edition of *Idea*. Page references hereafter to *Idea* are to be the Uniform Edition unless noted otherwise.

7. Newman deleted the fifth discourse so as not to offend papal sensibilities. In the papal brief of March 20, 1854 concerning the University, Pio Nono stated that Catholic doctrine was to be intrinsic to the lectures in all the subjects. Newman notes in *AW*, 323, that his discourses, and especially the fifth, were based "on a different idea."

8. Along with *AW* and *LD*, *My Campaign in Ireland*, papers of Newman posthumously and privately printed by the Birmingham Oratory in 1896, can be usefully consulted.

9. *Historical Sketches* (referenced HS), iii, 2. Page references hereafter to *AW* are to the Uniform Edition.

10. *HS*, iii, 48.

11. Opposition to the Oxford reform was led by pamphleteers from Edinburgh who argued for utilitarian studies. Cf. *Idea*, 153. Some years later they also championed the ideals of the newly-founded University of London *pace* Oxford's espousal of liberal arts and theology. In the expurgated 5th discourse, Newman refers to the *Edinburgh Review* of February, 1826. See Ian Ker's edition of *Idea* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 420.

12. *Idea*, ix.

13. See *Idea*, 113, 121, 125 (especially), 134, 151.

14. Ibid., 461.

15. Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978). In Lonergan's *A Second Collection*, ed. W. Ryan and B. Tyrrell (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), he acknowledges Newman's influence. See 38, 263.

16. Such Thomistic distinctions can be useful in understanding Newman's ideas, but Newman himself was not a Thomist in either his expressions or his conceptualizations.

17. *Idea*, xiii.

18. Ibid., xvi, xvii.

19. Ibid., xviii, xx.

20. In his expurgated fifth discourse, Newman described how science itself can be called a philosophy, provided "it is knowledge which has undergone a process of intellectual digestion. It is the grasp of many things brought together in one." See Ker (ed.), *Idea*, 423.

21. For an analysis of first principles in Newman's thinking and for the pertinent references, see Edward Jeremy Miller, *John Henry Newman on the Idea of Church* (Shepherdstown, WV: Patmos Press, 1987), 9-20.

22. *Idea*, 502; see also 134.

23. Ibid., 495; see also the analogy with an infant on 332.

24. See *Idea*, 76 ff.

25. Ibid., 229.

26. Ibid., 474.

27. *HS*, iii, 16.

28. *Idea*, 461.

29. Ibid., 467.

30. *Idea*, 476, reads: "Great minds need elbow-room, not indeed in the domain of faith, but of thought. And so indeed do lesser minds, and all minds." Another text is in his "Letter to Pusey: "Life has the same right to decay, as it has to wax strong. This is specially the case with great ideas. You may stifle them; or you may refuse them elbow-room; or again, you may torment them with your continual meddling; or you may let them have free course and range, and be content, instead of anticipating their excesses, to expose and restrain those excesses after they have occurred." Cf. *Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching*, vol. 2, 79.

31. *Idea*, 217, 216.

32. On the matter of university appointments to the Catholic University Dublin, Newman was opposed to the hiring of non-Catholics. See *LD* 16:203.

33. *LD* 24:46. When Archbishop Manning attempted his own Catholic university at Kensington in 1873, Newman refused the invitation to cooperate, knowing the venture would be overly controlled and lacking academic freedom.

34. *Idea*, 263.

35. Ibid., 501-02.

36. *HS*, iii, 6.

37. Ibid., iii, 9.

38. Ibid., iii, 16.

39. *Idea*, 333 and the preceding pages.

40. Bennett, op. cit., 10-11. Admittedly, William Bennett's report is also concerned with how the humanities are taught but there is little description of the process *a la Newman*; rather, it is an attack on the misuse of the humanities for ideological purposes.

41. *HS*, iii, 74.

42. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, (Libreria Editrice Vaticana), official English translation, # 1.

43. The "Proposed Schema" of 15 April 1985, ## 17, 19, asserts that a Catholic university "takes on an ecclesial function." For background to the final document see Alice Gallin, "On the Road: Toward a Definition of a Catholic University," *The Jurist* 48 (1988): 536-58.

44. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, # 49.

45. Ibid., # 28.

46. Ibid., ## 3, 5, 13, 46, 49.

47. Ibid., # 13. These characteristics reiterate the document *The Catholic University in the Modern World* from the 2nd international congress of Catholic university delegates, Rome, November, 1972.

48. The literature on whether dissent from authoritative non-infallible magisterium is possible has become vast, due especially to the birth control issues surrounding Pope Paul VI's *Humanae Vitae*. See also *Lumen Gentium* of Vatican II (# 25) and commentaries upon it. On 26 June 1990 the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued the "Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian" which decidedly limits the possibilities of dissent; see ## 25-31. The *Report of the Catholic Theological Society of American Committee on the Profession of Faith and the Oath of Fidelity* (1990) argues for greater latitude in possibilities of dissent.

49. Printed in Neil McCluskey, *The Catholic University: A Modern Appraisal* (Notre Dame Press: 1970), 336-41.

50. "The Catholic University in the Modern World," op. cit., # 58.

51. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, ## 12, 28.

52. *The Code of Canon Law: A Text and Commentary*, commissioned by the Canon Law Society of America, ed. James A. Coriden et al. (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 571.

53. See the fine analysis by Ian T. Ker in his *John Henry Newman: A Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 549 ff.

54. For an analysis of the dialectics in Newman's ecclesiology, see Edward Jeremy Miller, op. cit., chapter 4. For Newman's 1859 essay, see *On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine*, ed. John Coulson (London: Chapman, 1961).

55. *HS*, iii, 228-29.

56. See *Idea*, 465.

# The Newman-Lonergan Connection: Implications for Doing Theology in North America

Carla Mae Streeter, OP

It is an awesome moment in theological study to come upon the relationship between two intellectual giants. This paper will be concerned with such a connection, that between John Henry Newman, convert and cardinal, and Bernard J. F. Lonergan, cradle Catholic and Canadian Jesuit. Newman died in 1890, and Lonergan almost a century later, in 1984. Both had similar concerns: to offer the world an option to the secular liberalism, relativism, and scientism that had no place for religious mystery.

The direction these two great minds took to open up this option was to meet the opposition on its own ground, the forum of the mind. Both begin phenomenologically, seeking to chart the movement of the mind toward certainty. Both were committed men of faith, Catholics, who were determined to include in their charting the reality and value of religious belief for modern day culture.

This brief paper will begin with Newman, and specifically the foundation he lays in *The Grammar of Assent*. The paper will consider the origin of the *Grammar*, the purpose Newman had in writing it, and the point that he wants to make. We will then turn to a consideration of Lonergan, and how he builds and expands on the foundation Newman has laid. Finally we will ask what this might imply for those who are doing theology in a North American context at the brink of the twenty-first century.

## *THE NEWMAN FOUNDATION*

The *Grammar of Assent* appears to have been written in response to a public accusation that Newman accepted as true. Editor Richard Simpson, in the December, 1858, issue of *The Rambler*, accuses Newman of writing "colossal fragments" while never producing a "finished edifice."[1] Newman had just returned from his term as first rector of the Catholic University of Dublin. It was at Dublin that he had delivered the series that eventually became the contents for *The Idea of a University*. A month after Simpson's accusation appeared, Newman began work on a writing he called *Discursive Enquiries on Metaphysical Subjects*. By September, 1859, as the archives of Birmingham reveal, he began work on a section called "Formation of Mind." On January 15, 1860, he received the letter from his friend, William Froude, considered by many to be the most immediate cause of the writing of the *Grammar*. Froude wrote that his growing appreciation of the rigorous standards of scientific investigation was moving him further and further into skepticism and agnosticism.[2] The conviction was growing in Newman that the time was growing short for producing a coherent defense of faith against the liberalist zeitgeist. Catholic intellectuals were under siege.

Newman's article, "On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine," appeared in *The Rambler* in July, 1959. It caused a stir, making his orthodoxy suspect in the eyes of the hierarchy. He abandoned his *Discursive Enquiries* project as adding fuel to the fire of the growing tension, and began a simple collection of theologico-philosophical reflections. He worked away at response after response to Froude's dilemma. By 1866 he formulated a writing plan for the *Grammar*, and in 1870 he completed it.

In a note added to the *Grammar* in 1880, Newman gives us the clear purpose of the work. He wrote to describe the "Organum Investigandi," the process of investigation, keeping in mind religious and theological truth as part of the quest of the investigator. This argumentative work "in defense of my creed," is intended to take on any who would accuse Newman of a blind pietism.[3]

The point Newman drives home in this final work is that the process of the mind is a circling and spiralling movement, precisely what Newman himself experienced in his own conversion, and what was happening as he had set out to gather his "colossal fragments" into a "finished edifice."

There are elements to this *novum organum investigandi*.

*Sr. Carla Mae Streeter is an assistant professor of systematic theology at the Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis, MO.*

There are assumptions and first principles, premises which enter in, ethnico-personal dispositions, and a mode of arranging and considering the matter for debate.

The method to be followed was phenomenological. It does not merely state former conclusions but is concerned with the life and structure of our cognitional and ethical nature as it unfolds in its own operations. Newman will search for this recurring pattern in his own consciousness and then ask his readers to verify for themselves the truth of the assertions he has made. This self-appropriation completed, it remains but for one to apply this method theologically.[4]

The unique discovery of Newman in this process is what he names the *illative* sense. It is the mind's power to judge or conclude in the concrete, not in the abstract.[5] Norris describes it in this way:

> According to logic, which is the formal exhibition of all demonstrative science, the only certain conclusions are deductions from self-evident principles: theories, hypotheses and opinions may have any degree of probability, but they can never be certainties, for absolute verification is not possible. For Newman, however, the illative sense is just such an absolute verification, because it is able to establish the focal point of an otherwise inconclusive evidence, meeting a question in the spirit, though not in the letter, of rationality. It concludes a process, too complex for easy and complete articulation, too elusive and minute for adequate analysis, and too rich in its data for restricted methods.[6]

Newman created his own terms to explain what he means. Formal inference for the liberal thinker is the only way to certainty. For Newman, inference is the conditional acceptance of a proposition. Assent, in contrast, is the unconditional acceptance of a proposition: "... the object of Assent is a truth, the object of Inference is truth-like . . . ."[7] For Newman, acts of inference are both the antecedents of assent before assenting, and its usual concomitants after assenting.[8]

Assent does not have the reasoning character possessed by inference, but the two are compatible. Simple assent is an unconscious act of unconditional acceptance, while complex or reflex assent for Newman is a conscious and deliberate act of unconditional acceptance. Certitude as a mental state is a complex assent to a notional or imaginative proposition.[9] The key to what Newman is trying to clarify in the *Grammar* is the careful distinction between assent and inference.[10]

Although distinct in his approach, Newman is in harmony with the intellectual emphasis of Aquinas. The mind is not a pawn, but a source of its own results. It is Newman's genius to have begun to chart its operations. It will be the task of another genius, almost a century later, who will build on that foundation.

## *THE LONERGAN EDIFICE*

Bernard J. Lonergan was born in Buckingham in the province of Quebec, Canada, in 1904. He died at the Jesuit infirmary at Pickering, east of the city of Toronto, in 1984, just a few weeks short of his eightieth birthday.

Lonergan is often indiscriminately classified with Transcendental Thomists. His own comment on this can be found in *Method in Theology*:

> In his book, *The Transcendental Method* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), Otto Muck works out a generalized notion of transcendental method by determining the common features in the work of those that employ the method. While I have no objection to this procedure, I do not consider it very pertinent to an understanding of my own intentions. I conceive method concretely. I conceive it, not in terms of principles and rules, but as a normative pattern of operations with cumultative and progressive results. I distinguish the methods appropriate to particular fields and, on the other hand, their common core and ground, which I name transcendental method. Here, the word, transcendental, is employed in a sense analogous to Scholastic usage, for it is opposed to the categorical (or predicamental). But my actual procedure also is transcendental in the Kantian sense, inasmuch as it brings to light the conditions of the possibility of knowing an object in so far as the knowledge is *a priori*.[11]

An air of mystery, almost a mystique, surrounds Bernard Lonergan. Serious readers who begin a tentative exploration into Lonergan's thought by reading the first five chapters of *Insight* often go no further. While it is true that Lonergan is about a distinct project and cannot easily be categorized with a specific type of Thomist approach, he can be quite accessible to students who have some acquaintance with Newman's thought. In Lonergan's own words, it serves us well to begin to gather an idea of the connection.

> . . . philosophic reflection has to sort out the two manners (of knowing), to overcome regressive tendencies to childish feelings and ways, and to achieve the analytic task of disentangling the many components in human knowing and the different strands in its objectivity. A list of the different ways one can go wrong will provide, I believe, a thumbnail sketch of most of the main philosophical systems. . . . there is the question whether my prior allegiance to Thomism did not predetermine the results I reached. Now it is true that

> I spent a great deal of time in the study of St. Thomas and that I know I owe a great deal to him. I just add, however, that my interest in Aquinas came late. As a student in . . . philosophy . . . in the twenties I . . . went through the main parts of Newman's *Grammar of Assent* six times. . . . Only later in that decade, when studying theology, did I discover the point to the real distinction (in knowing) by concluding the *unicum esse* from the Incarnation and by relating Aquinas' notion of *esse* to Augustine's of *veritas*. Finally, it was in the forties that I began to study Aquinas on cognitional theory, and as soon as the *Verbum* articles were completed (*Theological Studies*, 1946-1949), I began to write *Insight*.

This sketch of his own intellectual development is found in *A Second Collection*[12] and is followed by other references to his own development in relation to that early acquaintance with Newman:

> Newman's remark that ten thousand difficulties do not make a doubt has served me in good stead. It encouraged me to look difficulties squarely in the eye, while not letting them interfere with my vocation or my faith. His illative sense later became my reflective act of understanding.[13]

> Chapters nine, ten, and eleven (of *Insight*) have to do with judgment. Chapter nine endeavors to say what we mean by judgment. Chapter ten investigates the immediate ground of judgment and finds it in a grasp of the virtually unconditioned, a view that was preceded in my thinking by some acquaintance with Newman's illative sense.[14]

One can gain a helpful grasp of the "edifice" Lonergan builds in *Insight* with an initial reading of "Insight Revisited" in *A Second Collection*.[15] Such a reading gives one the sense that what Newman began has been carried to an intricate analysis.

It was Lonergan's intent to write *Insight* as the first of a two volume project. The second volume was to be *Method in Theology*, rounding out the study to include the role of religion and faith in a thorough understanding of what knowing is.

The density of *Insight* required Lonergan to wait four years until a publisher was found for his manuscript in 1957. *Insight* had been finished in 1953. With its completion Lonergan was assigned to the Gregorianum in Rome to teach, and a ten-year hold was put on the completion of the second volume. The wait was providential. During his Roman period Lonergan wrestled with the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation, producing significant Latin works that now in translation are only beginning to be known. Most importantly, Lonergan wrestled with existentialism, and with an international community of students. These two elements served to bring an exposure that would otherwise be missing from *Method in Theology* which appeared in book form in 1970 after numerous lectures on its contents.

One who reads *Insight* without knowing that *Method* is its completion does not know the complete Lonergan, for his purpose, like Newman's, is apologetic. That purpose is to meet those who would dispense with faith and religious love on their own terms: the operations of the mind as it seeks truth.

As with Newman, the beginning is phenomenological. The attention is to what we do by nature to know. The sciences, both natural and human, know what it means to begin with data. Lonergan will challenge them to widen their horizon on this data, including not only the data of sense, but the data of consciousness. The data of consciousness need to be observed; they need to be objectified, charted. The results will be a cognitional theory based on objectifying the operations of the intelligence as it moves toward judgment, toward knowing. As this process is noted, its pattern is reaffirmed again and again. An epistemology becomes possible, for the first time based on empirical data, the data of consciousness. It becomes possible to ask why *this* is knowing, and nothing else is. It will be these data, these data of consciousness of the human operator, that become the locus for the inbreaking of grace and the theological life of faith, hope, and charity that give evidence of its presence.

Newman had envisioned an "Organon Investigandi."[16] He had laid its foundations. But he also realized that he had but begun this momentous project.

> You have truly said that we need a Novum Organum for theology—and I shall be truly glad if I shall be found to have made any suggestions which will aid the formation of such a calculus—but it must be the strong conception and the one work of a great genius, not the obiter attempt of a person like myself, who has already attempted many things, and is at the end of his days. [John Henry Newman, 16 March 1870, *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, vol. 25 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 56-57.]

The edifice that Lonergan builds on Newman's remarkable foundation is an empirical account of Aquinas' intelligence in act. Beginning with the phantasm that arises out of the data of sense or consciousness, Lonergan traces the dynamism of the human intelligence. The dynamism manifests itself in distinct questioning. Questions for inquiry lead to insight or the pivotal linking of elements of imagery. The linking enables a concept to form. Questions for reflection move the mind into a judgment of the truth of the insight, an expansion of Newman's illative sense. Questions of

value move the human agent into a judgment of value which triggers choice.

It is helpful here to recall that Lonergan's thesis dealt with operative and cooperative grace in Thomas Aquinas. In terms of cognition this theological focus becomes the backdrop for Lonergan's use of the expression "vector." The upward vector becomes the mind moving in its step-by-step pattern from the simple experiential awareness of data through insight, conceptualization, to judgment, and finally choice. The downward vector, the dynamic of being grasped by religious love, which manifests itself first in a judgment of value, a commitment, and then proceeds to seek the understanding of what one knows in faith. This downward movement or healing vector is a functional explanation of what we have known as sanctifying grace. The healing is *for* the creative movement of the mind freed for its intended patter of operation.

Much remains to be done on an exploration of how Newman's stress on the imagination is critical in the whole process of understanding. Lonergan deals with it only in a beginning way in chapter XVII of *Insight*.[17]

The implications for the human agent as a believer need to be drawn out. If Lonergan's analysis is correct, then we have for the first time the grounding of the grace dynamic in human consciousness, and in human knowing. We have the beginnings of an explanation, not merely a description, of the dynamic of grace as it functions in total respect of the human intelligence, yet providing it a certainty it experiences but does not understand.

## *IMPLICATIONS FOR TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY THEOLOGY IN NORTH AMERICA*

Newman's concern, the undermining of faith by a growing secular world view, has become a lived reality for our generation. Relativism, and the abandonment of the search for Truth among many partial truths, is rampant on our university campuses. Young people have little or no light to find their way out of the maze. Little, that is, unless someone opens to them the marvelous operations of their own minds. For this indeed is the *organon*, and knowing its pattern opens to one the *novum organum investigandi* that Newman had the vision to foresee would be needed.

One only need pick up a best seller such as Alan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind* to explore the impact of this rudderless intellectualism in the American context. It manifests itself in ethical areas, in power economics and authority questions, and in much vacuous theology.

The contribution of these two giants provides a light in this intellectual darkness. This is not because they provide answers, but because they have given us a clarity on that which seeks the answers, our own intelligences, and the definite place both reason and faith have in the quest. Without sound cognitional theory, the direction pointed by such consciousness philosophers as Gadamer, Polanyi, and Voeglin becomes only a vision with no means of attainment except desire. Newman and Lonergan are convinced that that desire is destined to be realized and have charted the means.

As we move toward the turn of the century, we carry with us a development in the natural and human sciences that has never been so developed in our human history. There is at the same time an unprecedented hunger for the ultimate reality toward which each of the sciences with its specific content focus converges. This provides a climate for the dialogue of theology with the natural and human sciences unlike any so far in our history. The question becomes, where will theology enter the dialogue? Will it be able to speak the empirical language of the sciences and, recognizing that starting place, lead the partners to a sound explanation of the divine working *within* the material world? What is the significance of sound cognitional theory in the doing of sound theology? Perhaps for the first time we have an empirical anthropological base for theology to open up the ultimate concerns of the sciences. This could mean a *functional* reclaiming of theology as completion of the sciences.

There are the challenges that lie before us as philosophers, and as theologians. We have need of Aquinas in a new key. We have need to stand on the shoulders of a Newman, and we have need to begin the intellectual sweatwork that Lonergan suggests will be our only solution to the problem of the total decline of culture. His solution is one that builds on Newman's concern. We have need, in Lonergan's words, of "a divinely sponsored collaborative solution" that provides us for the first time with explanatory categories in consciousness for the dynamism of faith, hope and religious love as they enable the human to function in the renewal of culture.[18] This is the task of the *novum organum investigandi* for the twenty-first century.

What lies ahead is the building of a world community. This community will need a new economic world order. Theology has need of new categories to deal with the activity of God in religious traditions unknown to most theologians. Culture, regarded for the first time in history in its rich empirical diversity, will move into rudderless decline without the guiding hand of sensitive intelligence.

In the truest sense, the intellectual vision of John Henry Newman is a summons to the human community. We have within us the means for our own progress. It is both sobering and electrifying to realize that the divine is once again waiting upon a "Let it be done . . . ."

1. Thomas J. Norris, *Newman and His Theological Method: A Guide for the Theologian Today* (Leider, Netherlands: E.J. Drill, 1977), 23.

2. Ibid., 24.

3. John Henry Newman, *An Essay in Aid of A Grammar of Assent*, ed. Nicholas Lash (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979) 382 ff.

4. Norris, 27-28.

5. Newman, 271, 276.

6. Norris, 42-43.

7. Newman, 209.

8. George W. Rutler, "Newman on Assent to Religious Belief," *Christ and Reason: An Introduction to Ideas from Kant to Tyrrell* (Front Royal, Virginia: Christendom Press, 1990), 59-92.

9. Ibid., 81.

10. Norris, 29.

11. Bernard Lonergan, SJ, *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1971), 13-14.

12. Bernard Lonergan, SJ, *A Second Collection*, eds. W.F.J. Ryan, SJ, and B.J. Tyrell, SJ (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1974), 38.

13. Ibid., 263.

14. Ibid., 273.

15. Ibid., 263-278.

16. David M. Hammond, "Imagination and Hermeneutical Theology: Newman's Contribution to Theological Method," *The Downside Review* 106 (1988): 23.

17. Bernard Lonergan, SJ, *Insight: A Study of Human Understandings* (New York: Harper Row, 1978), 530-594.

18. Ibid., 729.

# Newman and "The Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian"

Gerard Magill

*Catholic Christendom . . . presents a continuous picture of Authority and Private Judgment alternately advancing and retreating as the ebb and flow of the tide (Apologia, 226).*[1]

The recent "Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian" from the Vatican raises the question of the relation between conscience, theology, and ecclesial authority; in that document the "sense of faith" that characterizes a vibrant church is not only closely associated with the "Magisterium of the Church's Pastors" but also distanced from what is called "a supreme magisterium of conscience."[2] A century after the death of John Henry Newman (1801-1890) the Catholic Church continues to struggle with a question that was central to his own writings, and especially significant for his lifelong concern with education. It was precisely to theology (to the ecclesial vocation of the theologian) that Newman turned to maintain conscience and authority in constructive tension. He was especially fearful of the tyrannical oppression of one over the other in his own day: the glorification of private judgment (conscience) in the rationalism of religious liberalism, and the tyranny of triumphant power (authority) in the blind obedience of ultramontanism.

Newman maintained his balance between these two extremes by articulating an epistemology that not only justified religious assent through personal conscience but also warranted dissent from legitimate ecclesial authority. In this essay I will argue that Newman's educational strategy bridged the chasm between assent and dissent by creating three interlocking spans, conscience, theology, and authority, with theology holding the key place to ensure healthy tension between the interacting claims. I begin my analysis by briefly examining his theory of assent.

## *ASSENT*

Newman explained that "(a)ssent is . . . unconditional" (*Grammar*, 259),[3] an absolute affirmation of truth that can be elicited in matters of faith and morals. He argued that we can reach certainty even when the particular conclusion cannot be demonstrated strictly by the available evidence or proven by logical reasoning. To warrant assent he appealed to personal reasoning. This mode of reasoning functions through a congruence of arguments, interpreted as a whole and assimilated by the individual, to justify the conclusion. This occurs, for example, when spouses examine their reasons for marriage: there comes a point when the various arguments (none of which may be persuasive in itself) converge, being interpreted by the partners in a holistic way that justifies the decision to marry. Newman referred to this mode of *personal reasoning* as *"informal inference,"*[4] and it was as important for his view of theology as it was for his theory of assent.

In 1870 the clearest explanation of his argument was presented in the *Grammar of Assent*, defining assent as a "perception of the legitimate conclusion in and through the premisses" (*Grammar*, 301-302). To describe the process of reasoning that legitimates assent he used a metaphor from education, "the living mind" (*Grammar*, 360), or "living personal reasoning" (*Grammar*, 300). This 1870 metaphor of "the living mind" is reminiscent of his key metaphor for sound education in his sixth discourse on university education (1852), the "enlargement of mind" (*Idea*, 125).[5] This parallel reveals an important affinity between his philosophy of education in the *Idea of a University* and his epistemology in the *Grammar*.

Two significant features of assent result from this metaphor of the living mind (informal inference). Assent entails "an active recognition of propositions as true" (*Grammar*, 344-345): this mode of reasoning entails reaching forward to insights in a personal fashion by affirming truth (assent) that may not be perceived by others. Again, this recalls his earlier educational metaphor that "educates the intellect to reason well in all matters, to reach out towards truth, and to grasp it"

*Dr. Magill is an assistant professor in the Department of Theological Studies at Saint Louis University.*

(*Idea*, 126). In addition, the possibility of personal error is obviated when assent illumines other knowledge; "when the conclusion is assumed as a hypothesis, it throws light upon a multitude of collateral facts, accounting for them, and uniting them together in one whole" (*Grammar*, 323). Again, this recalls his educational metaphor for which "enlargement or illumination" (*Idea*, 126) requires "a comparison of ideas one with another, . . . and a systematizing of them" (*Idea*, 134). For Newman, verification entails interpretation in the sense that assent illumines other knowledge.

In sum, Newman's assent is neither a logical conclusion nor a whimsical guess, but has these basic features. First, it is the personal reasoning of informal inference (recalling his educational metaphor, "the living mind") that justifies assent. Second, assent transcends particular arguments as an active recognition of truth. Third, assent entails interpretation, beforehand in the congruence of inferences, and afterwards in the increasing unity that is brought to bear upon other knowledge. Using this theory of informal inference to warrant assent, Newman traversed the apparent chasm between religious assent and legitimate dissent by metaphorically building a bridge with three interlocking spans, conscience, theology, and authority, each of which is now examined.

## *CONSCIENCE*

Because Newman understood conscience as a religious but nonetheless reasonable judgment, he was able to draw an important parallel between assent and conscience:

> a mind thus carefully formed upon the basis of its natural conscience, . . . has a living hold on truths . . . is able to pronounce by anticipation, what it takes a long argument to prove . . . interprets what it sees around it (*Grammar*, 117).

Here, the three crucial features of assent are applied to conscience. First, the "living hold on truths" recalls his educational metaphor for eliciting assent, "the living mind." Second, discerning truth "by anticipation" points to the active recognition of propositions as true that is required for assent. Third, the mind that "interprets what it sees around it" encapsulates the interpretative process of assent. This threefold parallel indicates that he applied his theory of assent to conscience. Such a connection can be traced as early as 1831 to one of his sermons for the University of Oxford, preached at St. Mary's. There he explained that "an educated conscience, . . . seems to detect moral truth" by reasoning process that he later associated with informal inference.[6]

Newman also attributed a communal character to the judgments of conscience. In 1859 he published in the *Rambler* his article, "On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine," in which he argued that the "Consent of the faithful" was a "consensus" that should be regarded as "a sort of instinct, a *phronema* deep in the bosom of the mystical body of Christ" (*Cons*, 73), and he described this as the "conscience of the Church."[7] He was referring to the historical judgments of conscience made by the believing community as a whole, the term *phronema* expressing the communal character of personal reasoning. He later referred to the individual form of this type of personal reasoning when recalling Aristotle's practical moral reasoning (*phronesis*) to illustrate informal inference: "it is . . . with the controlling principle in inferences that I am comparing *phronesis*" (*Grammar*, 356).

Unlike Aristotle, Newman used practical reasoning (informal inference) to justify assent. Only two months after publishing the *Grammar*, Newman explained that he did not use practical "in opposition to speculative" but "to assert that probable arguments may lead to a conclusion which is not only safe to act upon, but is to be embraced as true" (*Letters*, xxv:114).[8] This is a crucial distinction for understanding the meaning of dissent in the church today. The recent "Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian" from the Vatican claims that the obligation to follow conscience cannot legitimate dissent because conscience illumines only the practical judgement.[9] In contrast, Newman applied his theory of assent to conscience, and prescribed consulting the conscience of the faithful, precisely to ascertain truth for doctrinal pronouncements. Hence, his use of *phronema* to describe the conscience of the church anticipated his later theory of assent.

Newman's view of conscience included not only an epistemological dimension, but also a theological dimension. He argued that consultation should precede doctrinal definition, because the assents of the faithful as judgments of conscience are a theological source of truth: "the *fidelium sensus* and *consensus* is a branch of evidence which it is natural or necessary for the Church to regard and consult, before she proceeds to any definition" (*Cons*, 55, Newman's emphases). In sum, the striking parallel between the three features of assent and conscience indicate that Newman applied his theory of assent to conscience. And these judgments of conscience bear a theological dimension that was central to his argument for consulting the faithful.

## *THEOLOGY*

Recently, Avery Dulles has claimed that theology played only a modest role in Newman's article "On Consulting the Faithful."[10] But he fails to appreciate the importance of theology for Newman's argument on the consent of the faithful (as the conscience of the church). The need for theology appears clearly in Newman's letter (June 1867) to Canon Walker, a professor at St. Edmund's College, Ware, in which he discussed the issue of theological condemnation in the *Syllabus of Errors* (1864):

> For myself I think the secures judicat orbis terrarum, is the real rule and interpretation of the words of the Church, i.e., the sensus theologorum primarily, then consensus fidelium next (*Letters*, xxiii:254).

Here Newman used an Augustinian phrase, which he translated as "the Christian commonwealth judges without misgiving" (*Letters*, xxiv:354), to express confidence in the historical judgements of the believing community for formulating doctrine. This is what the recent Vatican instruction means by the "sense of faith" that belongs to the whole people of God and yields "a universal consent in matters of faith and morals."[11] However, Newman articulated how the sense of faith functions, by implementing his theory of assent in conscience as a theological undertaking:

> (t)o a mind thus carefully formed upon the basis of its natural conscience, . . . the theology of a religious imagination . . . has a living hold on truths . . . is able to pronounce by anticipation, . . . it interprets what is sees (*Grammar*, 117).

The "living hold of truth" in assent that is achieved by theology (Newman refers to theological "imagination" as synonymous with his educational metaphor "the living mind") implies that the collective judgment of theologians operates just like the collective conscience of the community, that is, by using the personal reason. Walter Jost has amply shown that theology provides the richest store of Newman's discussion of method;[12] and I am arguing that Newman's theological method adopted the same use of reason (informal inference) as did assent and conscience. Because his theory of assent, which he implemented in his view of conscience, is at the heart of his epistemology, it is no surprise that the same method of reasoning in theology provided theology with central place in his 1877 preface to the *Via Media*: "Theology is the fundamental and regulating principle of the whole Church system" (*Via Media*, xlvii).[13]

The context of this remark dealt with the three offices of the church, priestly, prophetic, and regal (referring to the domain of worship, teaching, and governance). Newman gave priority to theology because of its interpretative method (discerning truth through informal inference). Hence, truth, not obedience, guides theology: "(t)ruth is the guiding principle of theology and theological inquiries" (*Via Media*, xli).[14] The upshot of his connection between assent, conscience, and theology was that the consent of the faithful, as the communal assent and conscience of the church, was perceived as a theological process. And to safeguard the integrity of theological interpretation he promoted theology (as religious teaching) in the university, defending its freedom of inquiry.[15]

The university, he argued, was the place "in which the intellect may safely range and speculate, sure to find its equal in some antagonist activity, and its judge in the tribunal of truth . . . . It is a seat of wisdom, a light of the world, a minister of the faith" (*HS*, iii:16). Theology, in the service of faith, was at home in the university because it adopted the same method of reasoning (informal inference) as was celebrated by Newman in his philosophy of education: "the process of enlightenment or enlargement of mind" (*Idea*, 130) in the university functioned primarily by "reducing to order and meaning" (*Idea*, 134), an early articulation of the later argument of convergence in his history of assent.

Newman's defense of freedom in theology was countercultural in an increasingly ultramontanist church. In an appendix to the *Apologia*, he wrote: "(t)he freedom of Schools, indeed, is one of those rights of reason, . . . this implies not to moral questions only, but to dogmatic also" (*Apologia*, 447). Such an appraisal of theological freedom as a right of reason was echoed a century later in the Second Vatican Council's appeal to reason to justify the right of religious freedom.[16] Wishing to emulate the great medieval schools of theology, Newman argued that freedom was the sister of courage: "(i)t is manifest how a mode of proceeding, such as this, tends not only to the liberty, but to the courage, of the individual theologian or controversialist" (*Apologia*, 239).

To summarize, Newman argued that the interpretative function of theology (using informal inference to perceive truth) could flourish in the university only when freedom of inquiry was protected. Inquiry in theology and the inquiry of conscience are closely connected because each uses the same mode of reasoning to justify assent. To appreciate how Newman was able to connect theologically assent with dissent, I now examine how conscience and theology relate to the third span of this bridge, the authority of the church.

## *AUTHORITY*

At the end of the *Apologia* Newman balanced theological freedom as one of the rights of reason with the right of ecclesial authority to intervene in theological controversy. Occasions may arise, he explained, when a theologian is "just one of those persons whom the competent authority ought to silence; and, though the case may not fall within the subject-matter in which that authority is infallible, . . . it is clearly the duty of authority to act vigorously in the case" (*Apologia*, 232).[17] Unfortunately, Newman did not offer any criteriology for implementing such discipline. But by extending authority to non-infallible teaching, he clarified the terrain for discussing theological dissent. Then, as now, the possibility of dissent is discussed in relation to authoritative, but non-infallible, church teachings.

The Second Vatican Council explained that beyond the "ex cathedra" infallibility of the pope in matters of faith and morality, the ordinary magisterium of bishops has authentic teaching authority, whose force can be

discerned by three criteria: the character of the documents, the frequency of proposing the doctrine, and the manner in which the doctrine is formulated.[18] There is a "hierarchy of truths" that vary in relation to the foundation of faith in Catholic teaching.[19] Hence, the debate on dissent today focuses not upon the freedom of conscience but on the authority of the ordinary magisterium in general,[20] and of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in particular.[21]

Newman justified bishops' intervening in theological controversy on account of their apostolic office. Even as an Anglican in 1830 he defended his principle when writing to another Anglican vicar Simeon Lloyd Pope: "a system of Church government was *actually established* by the Apostles, and is thus the *legitimate* enforcement of Christian truth" (*Letters* ii:265, Newman's emphases). But just as theological freedom has limits, episcopal authority also must be restrained. That is why in his argument for consulting the faithful, theology and authority work together: "each constituent portion of the Church has its proper functions, and no portion can safely be neglected" (*Cons*, 103). The crux of the matter, then as now, is whether theology is independent of, though cooperative with, the hierarchy; or is theology delegated by, and derivative from, the bishops?[22] The recent Vatican instruction on the vocation of the theologian has also accepted a reciprocity between theology and the magisterium, recognizing that each must enrich the other, and accepting that the magisterium;s authority is only intelligible in relation to the truth of doctrine.[23] Newman's vision for theology centered upon the interpretative pursuit of truth would be at home here.

However, Newman was also appalled at the tyranny against theology by Catholic authorities in his own day. He recognized the right of church authority to intervene in theological disputes, but he berated the abuse of this power. In his Dublin university lectures in 1854, he warned his audience of a "wrong Conservatism" among clerics, due to "an over-attachment to the ecclesiastical establishment" (*H.S.*, iii:132). He was especially sensitive to the suspicion of his article "On Consulting the Faithful" in 1859 that incurred a Vatican inquiry after he was reported to Rome by Bishop Brown of Newport. Following that inquiry, Newman began to detect an expanding web of conservatism and suspicion that stifled theological freedom. And in August, 1868, writing to Henry Wilberforce, one of his oldest friends since Oriel, his discouragement was obvious:

> every word I publish will be malevolently scrutinized, and every expression which can possibly be perverted sent straight to Rome, . . . I shall be fighting *under the lash*, which does not tend to produce vigorous efforts in the battle or to inspire either courage or presence of mind (*Letters*, xxiv:120, Newman's emphasis).

Yet Newman was also politically astute. In his argument for consulting the faithful he had no interest in fomenting disquiet among the laity. Quite the contrary was the case because he adopted a submissive attitude towards episcopal oppression. He confided to Emily Bowles in May, 1963, referring to the Vatican's inquiry of his work: "(a)s what was said to me was very indirect and required no answer, I kept silence and the whole matter was hushed up" (*Letters*, xx:447). But his submissiveness did not betoken intellectual diffidence. Rather, it was a theological strategy for an intractable situation. In July, 1861, he wrote to Sir John Acton, a former associate with the *Rambler*, explaining that he was fearful of "the loss of union among ourselves, and the injury of great interests" (*Letters*, xx:5). He wanted to maintain church union and to minimize harm.[24]

Obedience and patience were the instruments of Newman's theological tactics. Writing in January, 1863, to William Monsell, a convert and friend in the Irish government who was fearful of the ecclesiastical restriction of religious freedom, Newman described his approach for handling Propoganda's suspicion of theological inquiry:

> All this will be overruled; it may lead to much temporary mischief but it will be overruled. And we do not make things better by disobedience. We may be able indeed to complicate matters, and to delay the necessary reforms; but our part is obedience. If we are but patient, all will come right (*Letters*, xx:391).

Patience was necessary because theological change occurs slowly over a long period of time, for Newman a basic principle of doctrinal development. Rather than construing his submissiveness to authority merely as personal compromise, there is sufficient textual evidence to recognize a strategy for putting political expedience at the service of theological truth. Newman's prudential approach illustrated an underlying principle: "the principle of Economy is this; that out of various courses, . . . that ought to be taken which is most expedient and most suitable at the time for the object in hand" (*Apologia*, 441).[25]

In short, by obedience Newman attempted to avoid provoking ecclesial authority in order to maintain the principle of unity among believers. And by patience he attempted to minimize harm in the community in order to support the principle of charity. Both theological freedom and episcopal authority were legitimate and necessary, but each should restrain the other. Ian Ker, in his biography of Newman, discusses the interdependence of theologian and ecclesial authority, insightfully arguing that for Newman truth isattained through the conflict of opposites.[26] I have attempted to trace the systematic foundation underlying this insight by relating theology first to conscience and then to authority in Newman's thought. It is this threefold interaction be-

tween conscience, theology, and authority, like three interlocking spans on a bridge, that provides the means for connecting assent and dissent in his thought.

## *DISSENT*

To appreciate Newman's complete view on the ecclesial vocation of the theologian it is necessary to trace the moments not only of private dissent but also of public dissent in his own life. First, private dissent was quite explicit in his response as an Anglican to his bishops after publishing Tract 90 in February, 1841, in which he critically examined whether the doctrine of the ancient church was contained in the Thirty-Nine Articles.[27]

> I yielded to the Bishops in outward act, viz. in not defending the Tract, . . . not only did I not assent inwardly to any condemnation of it, but I opposed myself to the proposition of a condemnation on the party of authority (*Apologia*, 416).

His private dissent was clearly directed against the opposition of the Anglican bishops to his tract. This type of dissent is common in the Catholic Church today. For example, artificial contraception is condemned by the bishops because of an inseparable bond between sexual union and procreation in marriage.[28] But contraception is used frequently by Catholic spouses, often justified in their consciences by a convergence of many arguments, akin to Newman's mode of informal inference. That is why, for example, Newman's argument for consulting the faithful is such an important theological insight: not only to interpret theologically the assents of the faithful as the conscience of the church, but to formulate a subtle theology of doctrinal development. Newman's own experience of private dissent, then, can be a spur to episcopal authority today to continue dialogue with the faithful and theologians alike.

Private dissent, however, was not the only type of dissent to which Newman acceded. Legitimate public dissent can also be traced in his life. Of course Newman rejected any dissent from infallible teaching. Hence, in his preface to the third edition of the *Via Media* in 1877 he explained: "the Catholic Church is ever more precise in her enunciation of doctrine, and allows no liberty of dissent from her decisions, (for on such objective matters she speaks with the authority of infallibility)" (*Via Media*, lxxv). Nonetheless, in the same preface he conceded that public dissent from non-infallible teaching was possible:

> it is the worst charity, . . . not to speak out, not to suffer to be spoken out, all that there is to say. Such speaking out is . . . the triumph of religion, . . . but it is not always so (*Via Media*, lvi-lvii).

The context of this citation is suggestive of his preference for obedience to authority when embroiled in theological controversy. Speaking out is not always wise, he explained, because "(v)eracity, like other virtues, lies in a mean (*Via Media*, lix). Here is another illustration of his principle of economy or reserve. Language cannot adequately express truth, and so it is legitimate to withhold truth or to set it out to advantage, for example, by being submissive through obedience. Robert Selby has persuasively shown that Newman personalized this principle of reserve in his life, tending towards moderation.[29] But his sketch of Newman's character is incomplete without adverting to his theological courage, a virtue that Newman openly extolled, and one that led to the public dissent of leaving the Anglican Church in 1845, and to the less dramatic controversies pertaining to private dissent within the church, first, Tract 90 in 1841, and then, "On Consulting the Faithful" in 1859.

Hence, for Newman the role for obedience in the ecclesial vocation of the theologian had unambiguous limits. In his "Letter to the Duke of Norfolk" (1874), he defended "the supremacy of Conscience" by excluding the possibility of giving "an absolute obedience" to the pope (*Diff*, ii:243). Newman's implementation of his theory of assent in his understanding of conscience enabled him to have utmost confidence in the supremacy of conscience as the primary mental instrument for discerning religious truth. Obedience, then, must first answer to conscience.[30]

## *CONCLUSION*

Newman's defense of the supremacy of conscience did not idolize "a supreme magisterium of conscience." This phrase is used in the recent Vatican "Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian" to repudiate an extreme stance, one that Newman had refuted as religious liberalism. But Newman also opposed another extreme position, the ultramontanist preference for uncritical obedience to ecclesiastical authority. For Newman, the ecclesial vocation of the theologian must strike a balance between these two extremes. To resist such polarization, he established an interaction between conscience, theology, and authority to maintain a healthy tension between the conscience of the community (the "sense of faith") and the authority of the bishops (the "Magisterium of the Church's Pastors").

When the Vatican instruction discussed the indissoluble bond between the "sense of the faith" and the "Magisterium of the Church's Pastors," unfortunately, a straw figure is set up when it is asserted that "the opinions of the faithful cannot be purely and simply identified with the *sensus fidei*."[31] The contribution that Newman can make to understanding the "sense of faith" is to elucidate the basic issue at stake: that is, not opinion but rather the judgement of assent. From an epistemological perspective, Newman presented a personal mode of reasoning (informal inference) as a sound way for discerning truth; therefore, the "sense of faith" arises

from the conscience of the church, from judgments rather than from opinions, from warranted assents. From a theological perspective, these assents arise as interpretations of the entire community of believers, and therefore both the authority of conscience (the "sense of faith") and the bishops' authority (the "Magisterium of the Church's Pastors") must be respected.

Newman's achievement, then, is to provide the theological means for maintaining an indissoluble bond between the faithful and the bishops. His larger strategy mentally was to build a bridge with three interlocking spans (conscience, theology, authority) that enabled him to traverse the chasm between assent and dissent. In a more particular way, he relied upon personal reason (represented by his education metaphor "the living mind") in theology to retain a healthy tension first between conscience and authority, and thereby between assent and dissent. Theology, then, can be described as the central span of his bridge, holding in tension the other spans of conscience and authority, and together providing the link between assent and dissent. However, if we accompany Newman on his mental journey we must be cautious. Bridges are notorious places for suicide. To discover the ecclesial vocation of the theologian in our Catholic colleges and universities, Newman advises us to beware of speedy but deluding solutions.

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1. John Henry Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (1864). Edited, introduction, and notes by M.J. Svaglic (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967). Hereinafter referred to as *Apologia*.

2. "Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian," *Origins* (July 5, 1990): 118-126, no. 4; section 111; and no. 38. Hereinafter referred to as "Instruction."

3. John Henry Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (1870). Edited, introduction, and notes by I.T. Ker (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), pagination of Newman's 1881 edition. Hereinafter referred to as *Grammar*.

4. My emphasis; see chapter VIII, section 2, "Informal Inference," in the *Grammar*, 288-329.

5. John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University, Defined and Illustrated* (published, 1873), integrating the *Discourses on the Scope and Nature of University Education* (published, 1853), with the *Lectures and Essays on University Subjects* (published, 1859). Edited, introduction, and notes by I.T. Ker (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976). Page references are to the final (ninth) edition (1889). Hereinafter referred to as *Idea*.

6. *Newman's University Sermons*, with introductory essays by D.M. MacKinnon and J.D. Holmes (London: SPCK, 1970), 66. In his 1873 edition, a footnote described the reasoning of conscience as "an *implicit* act of reasoning" (*Sermons*, 66, Newman's emphasis), a term that he later identified with informal inference: "such a process of reasoning is more or less implicit: (*Grammar*, 292).

7. He expressed this in French, "cette conscience de l'Eglise," John Henry Newman, *On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine* (1859). Edited with an introduction by John Coulson (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1961), 73. Hereinafter referred to as *Cons*.

8. A letter dated in April, 1870, to Richard Holt Hutton, the literary editor of the *Spectator*, in *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, 31 volumes, ed. C.S. Dessain et al., vols 1-6, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978-84); vols. 11-22 (London: Oxford University Press, 1961-72); vols. 23-31 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973-77). Hereinafter referred to as *Letters*.

9. "Instruction," no. 38. The opposite view, that "the teaching office is dependent on the conscience of the faithful" was stated by some European theologians in "The Cologne Declaration," *Origins* (Nov. 2, 1989): 634 (no. 3).

10. Avery Dulles, SJ, "The Threefold Office in Newman's Ecclesiology," in *Newman After a Hundred Years*, edited by Ian Ker and Alan G. Hill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 382.

11. "Instruction" no. 4, referring to the "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," no. 12, in Austin Flannery, OP, ed., *Vatican II* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1975), 363.

12. See Walter Jost, *Rhetorical Thought in John Henry Newman* (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), 108-138. David Hammond has traced a similar view which he calls Newman's "hermeneutical theology" in "Imagination and Hermeneutical Theology: Newman's Contribution to Theological Method," *The Downside Review* (Jan. 1988): 17-34.

13. John Henry Newman, *The Via Media of the Anglican Church* (1837). Edited with Introduction and Notes by H.D. Weidner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990). Hereinafter referred to as the *Via Media*.

14. Also see *Via Media*, li.

15. Newman wrote, "(r)eligious teaching itself affords us an illustration of our subject," John Henry Newman, *Historical Sketches*, volume III (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1981), 14. Hereinafter referred to as *H.S.*

16. The "Declaration on Religious Liberty," no. 9, in Flannery, *Vatican II*, 806.

17. In his 1877 preface to the *Via Media* Newman again asserted that "there was nothing wrong in censuring abrupt, [startling,] unsettling, unverified disclosures" (*Via Media*, lv); the word [startling] appears in the standard edition (Longmans, Green, and Col. 1891), but not in Weidner's edition.

18. The "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," no. 25, in Flannery, *Vatican II*, 379-381, and the "Instruction," no. 13-17, and 24. The "Instruction" asserts that truths proposed in a definitive way "must be firmly accepted and held," no. 23.

19. The "Decree on Ecumenism," no. 11, in Flannery, *Vatican II*, 462. Charles Curran has attempted to develop the distinction between infallible and non-infallible teachings by differentiating what is central and peripheral to the faith, see "Public Dissent in the Church," *Origins* (July 31, 1986): 181.

20. For a valuable and succinct history of the term "ordinary magisterium" see William W. May, "Catholic Moral Teaching and the Limits of Dissent," in *Vatican Authority and American Catholic Dissent*, edited by William W. May (New York: Crossroads 1987), 87-90.

21. The recent Vatican "Instruction" claims that documents from this congregation" expressly approved by the pope participate in the ordinary magisterium" ("Instruction," no. 17). The most insightful collections of essays on authority and dissent in the Catholic tradition are,

William W. May, ed., *Vatican Authority*, and Charles Curran and Richard McCormick, eds., *Readings in Moral Theology No. 6: Dissent in the Church* (New York: Paulist, 1988).

22. Charles Curran argues that the requirement of a mandate in the new *Code of Canon Law*, canon 812, implies the latter view, "Public Dissent in the Church," 179. I explain that Newman unambiguously espoused the former view.

23. See, "Instruction," no. 14, 40.

24. Although William Ribando, CSC, makes no reference to Newman's interpretative theology, he shrewdly notes that his teaching of truth was regulated by pastoral concerns, "Newman on Prophecy and Dissent," *The Catholic World* (Jan./Feb. 1990): 42. Terence Merrigan calls this Newman's "devotional sense" in "Newman the Theologian," *Louvain Studies* (Summer-Fall, 1990): 113.

25. Newman learned of the principle of economy from the early Alexandrian Church, see his, *The Arians of the Fourth Century*, 1833 (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1890), 65.

26. Ian Ker, *John Henry Newman: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 553. John T. Forde, CSC, has insightfully examined how Newman encountered these conflicts in "Dancing on the Tightrope": Newman's View of Theology," *Proceedings: The Catholic Theological Society of America* (vol. 40., 1985): 127-144.

27. John Henry Newman, "Remarks on Certain Passages in the Thirty-Nine Articles" (Tract 90), *Tracts for the Times*, vol. VI (London: Rivington, 1841). The Anglican theologian Sheridan Gilley describes the difficulty of Newman's attempt in Tract 90 to prove that the Thirty-Nine Articles of Anglicanism could be read in a Catholic sense as an exercise that looked like squaring the circle, *Newman And His Age* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1990), 198.

28. "Humanae Vitae" (Encyclical Letter of Pope Paul VI on the Regulation of Birth, July 25, 1968), in *Love and Sexuality*, ed. Odile M. Liebard (Wilmington, North Carolina: A Consortium Book, 1978), 336-338 (no. 12-14).

29. Robert C. Selby, *The Principle of Reserve in the Writings of John Henry Cardinal Newman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 99-101.

30. This view has been most clearly expressed by James Gaffney, "Newman as a Moralist," *The Catholic World* (Jan./Feb. 1990): 27.

31. "Instruction," no. 35. On the relation between the "*sensus fidei*" and the "magisterium" of bishops, see the "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," no. 12, in Flannery, *Vatican II*, 363-364.

# Cardinal Newman: A Study in Integrity

John R. Quinn

On August 11, 1890, John Henry Newman died a peaceful, gentle death surrounded by his brothers of the Birmingham Oratory. A noble intellectual and spiritual mentor had passed away such as seldom appears within any century of our human history. As we celebrate the centenary of Newman's death, we do so conscious of the extraordinary human being and Christian that he was during his lifetime and of the ways, direct and indirect, in which he continues to speak to the church and the world of our day.

Today I would like to address Newman's integrity, the path toward truth which his integrity led him to follow and Newman's enduring gift to the entire church in his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*.

## *NEWMAN'S INTEGRITY*

The essay, and its significance for the church today, is very much tied to Newman's integrity.

In a world of expediency and pragmatism, integrity of the sort which Newman evinced seems rare. Yet it was integrity—personal, intellectual and spiritual—which led Newman on the path from evangelicalism through the Anglican *via media* and ultimately to the Catholic Church. It was integrity which required of him, in all honesty, to articulate that journey and its implications in a way which challenges even today. We have much to learn from Newman, especially in a time such as our own when, as Karl Rahner once intimated, people are impatient with the precision which leads to theological truth.[1]

Perhaps nowhere in his written works do we find this intellectual and religious integrity more clearly revealed than in Newman's theological classic, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*. For it is in the *Essay* that all of Newman's intellectual and religious forces converge. The *Essay* was for Newman not simply an exercise in scholarship; it was an intellectual test of his own religious convictions; it was an existential act undertaken in literary form.

As is well known by now, Newman began his work on the *Essay* in the midst of a crisis of religious identity; he was already leaning strongly toward Rome, yet trying to remain an Anglican. A glance at the chronology of Newman's passage from Oxford to Rome shows that the *Essay* is the fruit of a conversion already well on the way. Nevertheless, Newman was "watching his own state of mind" regarding his move into the church of Rome. He was testing it. In the *Apologia* Newman reports his state of soul at this juncture:

"To be certain is to know that one knows; what inward test had I, that I should not change again, after that (sic) I had become a Catholic? I had still apprehension of this, though I thought a time would come, when it would depart . . . I must do my best and then leave it to a higher power to prosper it."[2]

To address such a state of soul, he wrote the *Essay*. "So, at the end of 1844, I came to the resolution of writing an essay on doctrinal development; and then, if at the end of it, my convictions in favor of the Roman church were not weaker, of taking the necessary steps for admission into her fold."[3]

Newman's motivation, therefore, was one of religious integrity, tested by the most rigorous standards of intellectual integrity. The stakes riding on the *Essay* were as radical as his salvation itself. Indeed, he was to write a friend at the time of his contemplated move into the Catholic Church:

"(A)s far as I know myself, my one paramount reason for contemplating a change is my deep, unvarying conviction that . . . my salvation depends on my joining the church of Rome."[4]

In my view, this deep religious motivation, this extraordinary religious integrity, is central to an understanding of Newman and of his abiding pertinence to our own religious situation. Neither his view of doctrinal development nor even his researches in Arianism, the university or the structures of knowledge can be adequately understood outside this religious context, the driving religious forces of his life. He understood acutely what Anselm meant when he said that theology is faith seeking an understanding of itself.

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*John R. Quinn, DD, archbishop of San Francisco, delivered this address at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles in October, 1990. It was originally published in the February 7, 1991, issue of Origins.*

## *COMING TO GRIPS WITH DOCTRINAL CHANGE*

But what had triggered this dramatic change in Newman's religious posture—a move away from the church of his birth, of his nation and culture, and of his beloved university to a foreign church with which he was only mildly acquainted and about which he felt uncertain, almost to the eve of his reception in it? After all, as late as 1841 he would still be able to write that "Protestantism, so widely spread and so long enduring, must have in it, and must be witness for, a great truth or much truth."[5]

And he was willing to find that truth, if he could. It was, in fact, truth that Newman sought, and here again the force of his integrity was extraordinary. So driven was he to secure the truth, rather than a pale evocation of it dressed up in religious emotion, that he resolved, even though he felt a religious affection for the Catholic Church, to steel his mind and address on the basis of reason alone, the entire proposition of whether to adopt the Catholic faith. "I had to determine its logical value, and its bearing upon my duty."[6]

For Newman, intellect and will worked closely together, the will tested by the intellect, the intellect prodded by the will. And Newman was willing to be patient with the process, trusting that his religious leanings, if authentic, would withstand the intellectual tests to which he was about to put them. "Great acts," he said, "take time."[7]

Newman faced a difficult question which had a direct bearing on his life as a theologian and as a Christian: Recognizing that change had occurred in the doctrinal tradition of the Catholic Church, how could this change be explained in a way that would not compromise his intellectual and spiritual integrity? At first, there seemed only three possible solutions.

At one extreme, one could simply trivialize or even dismiss the importance of doctrine altogether, adopt an anti-dogmatic stance and enthusiastically embrace the newest formulations of faith without regard to their rootedness in doctrinal tradition. In Newman's opinion, this was the error of liberal Protestantism, a view amply represented in the Anglican Church of his day.[8]

Second, one could adopt a fundamentalist approach to faith and explain apparent doctrinal changes by invoking biblical texts. The result would be a religion primarily constituted of emotions and feelings, with little regard for the creedal and doctrinal elements of Christian faith, with "no intellectual basis; no internal idea, no principle of unity, no theology."[9] In Newman's mind, this was the flaw of evangelicalism.

Finally, one could adamantly refuse to acknowledge change and adopt instead a narrow-minded resistance to the very notion of a living tradition and insist upon a dogmatically pronounced orthodoxy rooted in a mythical Golden Age of Christianity. This position was represented within the Catholic Church by ultramontanism and later by integralism.

Newman was to suggest an altogether different view: that doctrines had developed through an organic interaction between the "idea" of Christianity revealed by God in Jesus Christ and the very human history of the church itself. One result of this organic developmental process, situated in human history, was the emergence of new doctrine, authoritatively taught because it is integrally tied to the ancient sources of the tradition and rooted in biblical revelation. This model of organic development of doctrine would meet Newman's own exacting standards of intellectual and spiritual integrity.

The *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* takes as its point of departure the simple observation that the claims of faith and the testimony of history do not always or obviously support each other. New doctrines, claims and moral teachings have arisen in the course of time which do not obviously appear at earlier periods in the church's life. Since this problem of a possible conflict between historical testimony and the claims of faith is central, historical evidences play a major role in the *Essay's* method. The evidences of history could lead to the negative conclusion that the present form of the Catholic Church is far removed from the original idea of Christianity, that the original religion has gradually decayed or become corrupt or "that it cannot even be said either to have decayed or to have died, because historically it has no substance of its own."[10] On the other hand, these same evidences of history could point to an underlying continuity through change in the successive ages of the church.

Newman makes the reasonable assumption that continuity, or substantial identity, exists between the teachings and practices of the apostolic church and the modern Catholic Church, for "the external continuity of name, profession and communion argues for a real continuity of doctrine." Protestantism's break in this continuity, on the other hand, leads to the conclusion that the "Christianity of history is not Protestantism. If these ever was a safe truth, it is this."[11] These words might astonish our ears, accustomed as we are to irenic ecumenical dialogue. But for a 19th-century Christian who took history as seriously as Newman did, it was not difficult to reach this conclusion.

On the other hand, the evidence of history cuts two ways: It may undercut the claim that Protestantism is the Christianity of history, but it does not positively demonstrate that in the Catholic Church is embodied the Christianity of history. Only if historical evidences are read within the hypothesis of the development of Christian doctrine will they tell either for or against the continuity of the Catholic faith. Newman proceeded in the *Essay* to test this hypothesis of doctrinal development by dipping further into the evidences of history, and he concluded, as we know, that there was no longer any reason for him not to go over to the Catholic Church, which was, as far as he could honestly judge, truly one, holy, catholic and apostolic. "Before I got to the end (of the *Essay*)," he reported, "I was resolved to be received,

and the book remains in the state in which it was then, unfinished."[12]

## *NEWMAN'S PATH TO THE ESSAY*

At this point, it would be helpful to focus on Newman himself and the problems he faced within Anglicanism in order to appreciate his work on development as it reveals his profound intellectual and spiritual integrity. Before he wrote the *Essay*, Newman expressed deep concern about what he termed the "present-day mistiness" of an Anglican Church which seemed more Protestant than Catholic. In his estimation, mid-19th-century Anglicanism had adopted approaches to religious truth which attempted to appeal to popular views and sensibilities and were in this sense "safe." These approaches had resulted in skepticism, agnosticism and even atheism. Such was to be expected, he argued, of a church where various forms of rationalism issued from both its evangelical and liberal branches. It seemed to Newman that the Church of England had become a refuge for a kind of religiosity which could not possibly stand up to rigorous intellectual tests. Anti-dogmatic liberals and evangelical rationalists, Newman believed, were trying to take over the Church of England.

In the extreme, the liberal bearers of an anti-dogmatic Gospel reduced doctrine to pious opinion, pitted revealed religion against scientific empiricism and exalted private judgment over the legitimate authority of doctrinal tradition. In Newman's opinion, these so-called "liberals" within the Anglican Church represented a Protestant extreme in their rejection of doctrinal tradition and uncritical accommodation to current opinions. Although he concluded that 19th-century Anglican liberalism was "too cold" an opinion to sway many people, it was symbolic for him of the malaise which had struck the Anglican Church.

Evangelicalism was perhaps more threatening than liberalism, because it had more popular appeal.[13] Newman had been reared in the evangelical wing of the Anglican Church. The evangelicals of his youth had been stalwart champions of the Protestant credo *sola Scriptura* and were relentless critics of that "anti-Christ," the church of Rome. Newman's own reading in the history of the church and of the Scriptures themselves gradually made it intellectually impossible for him to accept such a fundamentalistic position, regardless of his early religious roots. In one of his famous Oxford Tracts, he was to argue that it was inconsistent for evangelical Anglicans to argue against the apostolic succession on grounds that it is not clearly founded in the Bible, but to accept the divinity of the Holy Spirit, which is not literally spelled out in the Bible. "Indeed," he said, "the more arguments there are for a certain doctrine found in Scripture, the more objections will be found against it."[14]

Exasperated by those who would have demanded more of the Bible than it was intended to convey, Newman was later to write:

"Experience proves surely that the Bible does not answer a purpose for which it was never intended. It may be accidentally the means of the conversion of individuals; but a book, after all, cannot make a stand against the wild living intellect of man."[15]

Scripture could not be read outside history and especially not outside the developing tradition of the church. As Newman explained in the *Essay on Development:*

"The whole Bible, not its prophetical portions only, is written on the principle of development. As revelation proceeds, it is ever new, yet ever old."[16]

Newman believed that evangelicalism, by abandoning history and tradition, had divorced itself from the church of antiquity and had rejected the historical nature of Christianity. That had devastating implications for members of a church who counted themselves among the apostolic family of faith. The rejection of doctrinal tradition, together with a religiosity that emphasized subjective experience over the transcendent glory of God,[17] would eventually lead to rationalism.

In Newman's view, then, the Anglican Church of his day, plagued by both liberalism and evangelicalism, lacked doctrinal consistency or clarity. With the liberals clearly in mind, Newman described the mind of the typical 19th-century Anglican. Such a person:

—"Can set down half a dozen general propositions, which escape from destroying one another only by being diluted into truisms, . . .
—"Can hold the balance between opposites so skillfully as to do without fulcrum or beam, . . .
—"Never enunciates a truth without guarding himself from being supposed to exclude the contradictory, . . .
—"Holds that Scripture is the only authority, yet that the church is to be deferred to,
—"That faith only justifies, yet that it does not justify without works,
—"That grace does not depend on the sacraments, yet is not given without them,
—"That bishops are a divine ordinance, yet those who have them not are in the same religious condition as those who have."

He concludes in a somewhat sardonic vein:

"This is your safe man and the hope of the church; this is what the church is said to want, not party men, but sensible, temperate, sober, well-judging persons, to guide it through the channel of no-meaning, between the Scylla and Charybdis of Aye and No."[18]

Newman could not honestly count himself among the company of such "sober, well-judging persons" who, in the end, stood for no truth whatsoever, but only a lukewarm religious mistiness. "Piebald" rationalism,[19] in Newman's view, abused rather than exalted the facul-

ty of reason, threatened to evacuate revealed religion of all claim to truth or reality and could lead to one thing only, "a simple unbelief in matters of religion."[20] He was arguing, in fact, that such rationalism could only lead to atheism.[21]

## *TOWARD THE CATHOLIC ALTERNATIVE THROUGH HISTORY*

If atheism was the logical conclusion of Anglican liberalism and various forms of rationalism, its antithesis was the Catholic Church, embodying a religion steeped in history, a religion which prima facie was apostolic, a religion which (unlike evangelicalism) read the Scriptures in the context of tradition, a religion of manifest holiness and, above all, a religion which forthrightly believed that the revealed truth of God could be articulated in doctrine. In the end, Newman's conversion was to rest on the logical antithesis between atheism and the Catholic Church:

"I came to the conclusion that there was no medium, in true philosophy, between atheism and Catholicity, and that a perfectly consistent mind, under those circumstances in which it finds itself here below, must embrace either the one or the other. And I hold this still."[22]

But Newman was not to reach this conclusion before his own project of a middle way, a *via media* between Protestantism (represented especially by the liberals) and the Catholic Church, had itself collapsed. Again, it was Newman's integrity that pressed his sense of duty. His own scholarly work on early Christological controversies had already begun to shake his faith in the *via media*, for he saw in the Monophysites of the fifth century a middle ground, neither hot nor cold, and uncomfortably like the middle ground of the still theoretical *via media*, and even like the stance of the 19th-century liberals themselves.

The now-famous 1839 article by Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman titled "Anglican Claim to Apostolical Succession," shook Newman to the core. The *via media* had rested on the claim of antiquity—that Anglicanism was an authentic branch of the church catholic because it held what had been held everywhere, by all Christians, at all times—the criteria that had been expounded by St. Vincent of Lerins in the fifth century. But Wiseman invoked another ancient principle for determining the authenticity of doctrinal claims, Augustine's *securus judicat orbis terrarum*, which can be roughly rendered as "that which the entire *oikumene* of the church judges to be true is held securely."

It was painfully clear to Newman that the *via media* could not withstand such a test: It was as yet a paper-thin church, the dream of which was dearly held by only a few Oxford dons, hardly by the entire world church. Catholicity had to be a real historical mark of the church, not merely an ideal, and the concrete reality of that historical mark had to be evident in history. After all, Christianity itself was a fact of the world's history, not simply an unrealized dream.

Here, if I may suggest it, is where Newman's theological contribution in the *Essay on Development* is most significant. By turning to history as he did, Newman introduced a method which is essential to undertaking authentic theology. Newman did not use history simply to prove a foredrawn conclusion that the contemporary Catholic Church was continuous with the early Christian faith. Rather, he turned to history as the source of his theological inspiration, because it was within history that the central events of Christian faith took place. History is therefore the likely place to look for those "antecedent probabilities" that guide theological investigation into the mystery of Christ and of his church, and history is also the place to look for testing and corroboration of theological hypotheses. This historical methodology constitutes a tremendous gift to theological scholarship.[23]

Precisely why is this historical method such a gift to the church, and especially to theologians, even in our own age? Let me suggest two reasons. First, Newman's historical method is needed today as an apologetic tool, as a means of mediating the faith with the world at large. Second, Newman's historical method is needed today to deepen and ground theological discourse within the church itself.

## *NEWMAN'S METHOD AND CONTEMPORARY APOLOGETICS*

First, the apologetic task. Where Newman saw a necessary choice between the Catholic Church, on the one hand, and atheism on the other, it is now clear that much of the world has opted either for a culturally accepted agnosticism or for atheism, either as a philosophical credo or as a de facto existential stance. The sheer force of agnosticism and of atheism in our time cannot be denied. In Europe, the United States and the industrialized West, the phenomenon of the cultural dismissal of Christianity is growing, especially among the educated classes, a fact which has become the subject of increasing commentary.[24] It is quite clear that the Enlightenment's cleavage between faith and the world, between revealed truth and secular knowledge, still very strongly defines the contours of the educated consciousness, even in what some have called a postmodern and post-Christian era.

It is not merely coincidental, but rather in keeping with his uncanny foresight that Newman could write 20 years after his conversion of this new and "wonderful age" and of "the enlargement of the circle of secular knowledge" to the point of bewilderment, "the more so, because it has the promise of continuing, and that with greater rapidity and more signal results." He added that whereas liberalism was formerly the moniker of a theological party within Anglicanism, it had more recently become "nothing else than . . . deep, plausible skepticism."[25]

Such cultural skepticism, freed of its religious roots and buttressed by a positivistic view of science, was putting

many Christians on the defensive in the 19th century and alarming others. The problem for Newman was not the challenge of science as such; he was unperturbed by Darwin's findings.[26] The problem for Newman was the displacement of an intellectually and historically grounded religious faith by a smug scientism which dismissed religious faith as so much pious puffery and which claimed that its own methods had rendered traditional theology obsolete. Newman's recovery of a rigorous historical method was joined with a reaction to the cultural dismissal of the legitimacy of faith.

Newman's *Essay* can therefore be seen as model response to such cultural developments. Rather than argue for the plausibility and authenticity of Catholic faith on the basis of the terms of the argument set by various opponents, Newman, in his typically apologetic fashion, rested his case on the evidences which are most native to Christianity itself: the history of faith, faith in a God who became incarnate in history and whose revelation spans history from beginning to end. Rather than cede the terms of the argument to the proponents of empiricism, scientism or skepticism, or to their religious cousins the fundamentalists, liberals and the atheists, Newman turned instead to the sources: Scripture read within the context of tradition, tradition read within the context of Scripture, the patristic literature and the history of the church itself, including its theological history. Only by so doing could he live up to the standards of intellectual and religious integrity which he had set for himself.

## *NEWMAN'S METHOD AND CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY*

This leads us naturally to my second point: Newman's historical method is especially apposite to a deepening of theological discourse within the church itself. Since Newman's time vast horizons have been opened up for the theological and ecclesiastical worlds that he himself could not have foreseen: the immensity and ramifications of historical consciousness as an absolutely critical factor in the articulation of Christian belief and practice; the reality and role of inculturation in that same process; the relationship of Christianity to the other world religions, in other words, the question of the unique claims of Christianity; the centrality of the living worship of the church as a primary organ of tradition (a factor Orthodox Christians have never failed to acknowledge and to ponder); and finally, the understanding that doctrinal development embraces not just homogeneous growth, upon which Newman focused his attention, but also what, for want of a better phrase, is called the element of "discontinuity"—a highly charged issue for Christians who take the role and force of tradition seriously.

This is a tall theological order, and as we know, it is only the tip of the iceberg. Ours is a time of tremendous "plurality and ambiguity" of method, as Father David Tracy has noted.[27] At few other times in the history of the church has the need been more urgent to have at our disposal a theological approach, a method if you will, which would enable us to rise to the challenges we face. In recent years, there has been increasing collaboration among Catholic and non-Catholic theologians on these and other issues. Such collaboration is to be applauded and ought to be continued. Catholic theology has been particularly enriched by non-Catholic scholarship in such fields as Scripture, philosophical hermeneutics and cultural anthropology. At the same time, Catholics have been discovering that this collaboration has sometimes come at a high price—the diminution of our own theological stock, a dilution of our theological tradition.

Catholic theologian Father Matthew Lamb of Boston College recently described the mixed situation of Catholic academic theology in an era of ecumenical collaboration.[28] He has noted that while Catholic scholars have learned the methods and issues of Protestant theology in recent years, especially at the great secular centers of higher learning in this country, their own Catholic heritage itself has been slighted. Indeed, it must be said that some Catholic institutions seem to have been quite willing to downplay their own theological tradition. Among Catholic theologians there has been a marked diminishment of the classic sources of Catholic theology in patristics, classical theology and particularly the work of St. Thomas Aquinas. This is a matter of concern not only for the Catholic Church, but for the sake of effective pastoral ministry and of continuing an authentic ecumenical collaboration.

What Newman represents is a major direction theological scholarship can follow in the years ahead toward a recovery of the treasures of our respective theological traditions. Newman could not have tested his religious integrity or the theory of doctrinal development apart from his intellectual integrity. That intellectual integrity was undergirded by a strong foundation in biblical languages, the classics, Scripture, patristics, history and theology. He had intellectual deficiencies, to be sure: a less than adequate grasp of modern European languages, certainly no deep grounding in medieval theology and a less than thorough acquaintance with the major theological currents of the continent. But he had at his disposal a method of theological inquiry which allowed him to traverse those deficiencies and to draw on his strengths, to establish a solid contact with the faith tradition and to make a real contribution to the theology of the church. The recovery of such a historical method on a widespread basis within today's theological seminaries and graduate schools of theology, particularly within the Catholic world, is sorely needed at this time. If theologians can follow Newman's lead in recovering a historical theological method in the next few years for the sake of the future generations of the church, they will have made an immeasurable contribution to the cause of Christian faith.

## *ORTHODOXY WITH INTEGRITY*

One final observation. It is not an exaggeration to say the *Essay* and, once again, the orientation of Newman's whole life, are a singular proclamation of the critical importance of orthodoxy. It was after all, horror at doctrinal indifference and its practical implications in ecclesiastical life that brought about the Oxford Movement and moved Newman to write the *Essay*.

Newman's orthodoxy, however, is not that of a dogmatic crusader for a past age, but rather that of a subtle and sensitive lover of truth whose reverence for truth would not permit him to reduce orthodoxy to the mere repetition of lifeless, unchanging formulas. It is this delicate balance and tension between a love and respect for tradition, on the one hand, an openness to change and development, on the other, that makes Newman so crucially relevant a century after his death.

Permit me to cite one instance of Newman's relevance in our time.[29] The Catholic Church at present is beset in some quarters by what French theologians have called *integralism*. Integralism is a cast of mind and outlook that is in some ways more pernicious than doctrinal indifference or heterodoxy. Whereas the liberals of Newman's day distorted Christianity by trying to please everybody, ending with a "mistiness" that believes nothing, the integralist tries to absolutize everything but ends with a fundamentalism that is untenable. Integralists are self-proclaimed, champions of "wholeness" of Catholic belief, much as fundamentalists are self-proclaimed masters of the Bible. They use in abundance the vocabulary of orthodoxy and cite, selectively, papal and other church teachings in order to buttress their rigidity of mind.

While heresy, by its very definition, strikes out a particular element of faith by its one-sided and exclusive concentration on another, integralism strikes ultimately at the whole fabric of faith. It believes that faith, the church and doctrine, coming from the past, must remain unaffected by the present or the future, must admit of no diversity of expression and have no new horizons of understanding.

Newman, with his expansive vision and sense of history, was himself the object of attack by the integralist mentality, which he described in 1867 to his intellectual opposite, William George Ward, the Catholic editor of the Dublin Review: "Pardon me if I say that you are making a church within a church, as the Novations of old did . . . (Y)ou are doing your best to make a party in the Catholic Church, and in St. Paul's words are dividing Christ by exalting your opinions into dogmas."[30] Earlier, he had written, "It seems to me that a time of great reaction and great trial is before us."[31] Indeed, he had been no stranger to great trial even in his Anglican days.

The *Essay on Development* is a perennial refutation of all that integralism stands for and of the pseudo-orthodoxy which is its manifesto. Written a century and a half ago and almost 120 years before the Second Vatican Council, the *Essay* was a prophetic utterance whose value and applicability are still being discovered in our day, especially in relation to the historical and theological challenges and insights of this century. The *Essay* was a prophetic utterance to a Christian world not yet ready to understand and enter into dialogue with its author. Yet in God's time it became an utterance that contributed in rich measure to the change in climate and viewpoint that made possible the vision and message of the Second Vatican and of our own ecumenical era.

Newman's inspiration lay behind the oft-quoted words of Pope John XXIII in his address to the bishops at the opening session of the Second Vatican Council in October 1962:

"Our duty is not only to guard this precious treasure, as if we were concerned only with antiquity, but to dedicate ourselves with an earnest will and without fear to the work that our era demands of us . . . The substance of the ancient doctrine of the deposit of faith is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another. And it is the latter that must be taken into great consideration.

## *CONCLUSION*

In conclusion, let us acknowledge Newman as a figure whose intellectual and religious integrity continue to challenge us to grow and to change in ways yet to be made clear to us. This is the kind of integrity which Karl Barth was later to invoke when he said that clarity and simplicity in things of religion come not at the beginning of the journey, but only at its end.[32] We would do well to follow Newman in his journey and to take to heart the words with which ends the *Essay on Development*:

"Put not from you what you have here found; regard it not as mere matter of present controversy; set out not resolved to refute it, and looking about for the best way of doing so; seduce not yourself with the imagination that it comes of disappointment, or disgust, or restlessness, or wounded feeling, or undue sensibility or other weakness. Wrap not yourself round in the associations of years past; nor determine that to be truth which you wish to be so nor make an idol of cherished anticipations. Time is short, eternity is long."[33]

Today, may we follow Newman in his path of integrity, *ex umbris et imaginibus in veritatem*, out of the shadows and through our imaginings into truth.

1. See "What Is Heresy?" in *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 5, Trans. Karl-H. Kruger (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1966), 503-504.

2. *Apologia pro vita sua*, ed. David J. DeLaura (New York: Norton, 1968), 176-77.

3. Ibid., 177.

4. Ibid.

5. Letter to C.W. Russell, April 26, 1841, as in I. Ker, *John Henry Newman: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 226.

6. *Apologia*, 99.

7. Ibid., 136. The entire passage reveals his critical stance toward a mere "paper logic" with no grounding in actual religious experience. "And then I felt altogether the force of the maxim of St. Ambrose, *'Non in dialectica complacuit Deo salvum facere populum suum'*;—I had great dislike of paper logic. For myself, it was not logic that carried me on; as well might one say that the quicksilver in the barometer changes the weather. It is the concrete being that reasons; pass a number of years, and I find my mind in a new place; how? the whole man moves; paper logic is but the record of it. All the logic in the world would not have made me move faster toward Rome than I did . . . Great acts take time."

8. Ibid., 87. It should be clarified here that Newman's use of the term *liberal* cannot simply be transferred into our own day without several critical mediations. The term simply had a different reference for Newman than it has for us. For Newman, it referred specifically to a "party" of thought within the Church of England. In his *Apologia pro vita sua*, Newman published an appended "Note A: Liberalism," in which he acknowledged the multiple referents of the word even in his own time and even within the Catholic Church. Newman writes: "An explanation is the more necessary, because such good Catholics and distinguished writers as Count Montalembert and Father Lacordaire use the word in a favorable sense and claim to be liberals themselves . . . I do not believe that it is possible for me to differ in any important matter from two men whom I so highly admire . . . If I hesitate to adopt their language about liberalism, I impute the necessity of such hesitation to some differences between us in the use of words or in the circumstances of country; and thus I reconcile myself to remaining faithful to my own conception of it." *Apologia*, 216.

9. Ibid., 87-88.

10. *Essay*, 4.

11. Ibid., 7.

12. *Apologia*, 818.

13. See ibid., 87-88.

14. Tract 85, quoted and discussed by I. Ker, *Newman: A Biography*, 160.

15. *Apologia*, p. 188.

16. *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 1878 rev. ed., ed. Charles F. Harrold (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1949) 60.

17. Discussed by I. Ker, *Newman: A Biography*, 122.

18. *Apologia*, 88.

19. Quoted by I. Ker, *Newman: A Biography*, 120.

20. *Apologia*, 187.

21. "As I have already said, there are but two alternatives, the way to Rome and the way to atheism: Anglicanism is the halfway house on the one side, and liberalism is the halfway house on the other," *Apologia*, p. 160. Newman's use of the term *atheism* remains to be explored. It is unlikely that by atheism Newman intended either the materialistic atheism of the Enlightenment or the idealistic atheism of Feuerbach. Atheism was rather the loss of belief in the propositions of apostolic faith, such that they would cease to stand for anything real. Rationalistic reduction of the apostolic faith was tantamount to the abdication of real belief. One is left with the cultural and aesthetic accoutrements of religion, at most a pious unknowing (an agnosticism), but no real faith.

22. *Apologia*, 156.

23. Newman's insistence on history is all the more significant when we consider the state of theology in the middle of the 19th century. Although German theologians such as Mohler and others of the Tubingen school were beginning to engage in what today we would call historical theology, and while English divines, such as Newman himself, were engaged in extensive patristic and historical studies, the general state of theological scholarship within both the Church of England and the Church of Rome was, to a very considerable degree, defensive and apologetic. It is true that in the Catholic Church the intensity of 17th-century Counter-Reformational polemics had subsided but the air was, for all that, one of a battlefield with the smell and sounds of artillery still fresh and harsh to the senses. Furthermore, the overall mentality of the Roman church and of the theologians who made up the body of its *auctores probati* was pervasively—and serenely—ahistorical, almost bereft of the sense of historical consciousness that one takes virtually for granted in our day, certainly in contemporary theological research. For all practical purposes there had been no contributions to theological conversations or even to the general life of the Roman church from the Anglo-Saxon viewpoint for three centuries.

24. See, for example, observations by Father Michael J. Buckley, SJ, "Experience and Culture: A Point of Departure for American Atheism," Theological Studies 50-3 (September 1989), 443-465, and his magisterial *At the Origins of Modern Atheism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987). See also Karl Rahner, SJ, "The Church and Atheism," *Theological Investigations* 21 (New York: Crossroad, 1988), 138.

25. *Apologia*, 219-220.

26. See *Newman: A Biography*, 624.

27. *Plurality and Ambiguity: Hermeneutics, Religion and Hope* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987).

28. "Will There Be Catholic Theology in the United States?" America, May 26, 1990, 523-534.

29. Some of the commentary to follow is borrowed from my earlier article "Synod '85: Keeping Faith With the Council," America, Sept. 21, 1985.

30. Newman compares Ward's set with the evangelicals, who "talk of 'vital religion' and vital 'doctrines,' and will not allow that their brethren 'know the Gospel' or are Gospel preachers unless they profess the small shibboleths of their own sect." He concludes: "I protest then again, not against your tenets, but against what I must call your schismatical." As quoted by John Coulson in the Introduction to *On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1961), 47.

31. From a letter to Ambrose St. John, May 1857, as reported in Meriol Trevor, Newman: *Light in Winter* (Garden City, NY.: Doubleday, 1963), 169.

32. "The simplicity which proceeds from the apprehension of God in the Bible and elsewhere, the simplicity with which God himself speaks, stands not at the beginning of our journey but at its end. Thirty years hence we may perhaps speak of simplicity, but now let us speak the truth. For us neither the Epistle to the Romans, nor the present theological position, nor the present state of the world nor the relation between God and the world is simple. And he who is now concerned with the truth must boldly acknowledge that he cannot be simple." *Epistle to the Romans*, Preface to the 2nd ed., (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 5.

33. *Essay*, 416.

# Faculty Address

James L. Heft, SM

I am especially pleased to welcome the new members to our faculty. These new members are the first group that I had the opportunity to interview myself, a process that I found to be not only enjoyable and obviously important for our future as a university, but also educational, for I learned from them their dreams and aspirations, why they chose academic careers, what they believe is the purpose of education. Moreover, I learned about their special areas of research and thus about many disciplines unfamiliar to me.

We have begun our 141st academic year at this university. It is good to be here, to set our hands and hearts and heads once again to the task—that of providing the richest of possible experiences of learning and thinking for our students and for each other. An increased level of energy and excitement courses through the campus as we once again set about achieving our academic goals. The late A. Bartlett Giamatti, president of Yale from 1978 to 1986, described our moment well when he addressed the first-year students at Yale in August of 1985:

> There is a quickening of the blood, a sense of pleasurable adventure, every autumn in this place because once again we all gather together, the new people and those who have gathered before, to start the formal process of making-with-the-mind that is called education. Of course, more than the mind is involved, more than the formal process is engaged, for education is a matter involving character as well as intellect, the heart and spirit as well as the mind, the extracurriculum as well as the formal course of study; education is something longer, broader, deeper, than the 13 weeks of instruction for eight semesters, just as it is more than the learning that occurs in classroom, laboratory, and library, just as it is far more than an accumulation of information and the acquisition of fact and the compilation of grades. A transcript, for instance, no more tells the story of an education than a railroad timetable tells the story of a journey.[1]

I ask you to remember that in your classroom, in your laboratory, and in your office, each of you is this university. I realize that all of you, the new faculty as well as those who are returning for their second or fifth or twenty-fifth year, have dreams and aspirations. Let us support each other in achieving these worthy goals.

Many important issues will be competing for our attention in the months and years ahead. As we busy ourselves taking up the various elements of our academic plan, it is important that we look more carefully than ever at our fundamental purposes as a community of teachers and scholars. Otherwise, we might too easily become either dismayed at the sheer size of the task before us or too quickly distracted by matters that are immediately urgent, but important only as they contribute to our larger purpose. In an effort to focus our attention on the foundational matters, I ask us this afternoon to reflect for a few minutes on what it is that we are about as an educational community.

The most articulate proponent of liberal education was John Henry Newman, who died one hundred years ago this past August 11. Above all, for Newman, a liberal education teaches a person how to think. In Discourse VII of his *The Idea of a University*, he offers this elegantly crafted description of a liberally educated man (the education of women was not then a serious consideration, though his observations apply equally to all). A university education is

> the education which gives a man a clear conscious view of his own opinions and judgments, a truth in developing them, an eloquence in expressing them, and a force in urging them. It teaches him to see things as they are, to go right to the point, to disentangle a skein of thought, to detect what is sophistical, and to discard what is irrelevant. It prepares him to fill any post with credit, and to master any subject with facility. It shows him how to

*Fr. Heft is provost of the University of Dayton.*

> accommodate himself to others, how to throw himself into their state of mind, how to bring before them his own, how to influence them, how to come to an understanding with them, how to bear with them. He is at home in any society, he has common ground with every class; he knows when to speak and when to be silent; he is able to converse, he is able to listen; he can ask a question pertinently, and gain a lesson seasonably, when he has nothing to impart himself; he is ever ready, yet never in the way; he is a pleasant companion, and a comrade you can depend upon; he knows when to be serious and when to trifle, and he has a sure tact which enables him to trifle with gracefulness and to be serious with effect. He has the repose of a mind which lives in itself, while it lives in the world, and which has resources for its happiness at home when it cannot go abroad.[2]

Newman's description of the truly educated person is admittedly idealistic. But as I reflected upon his ideal, I found myself thinking about our own university and raised for myself four questions that I believe we should think about. First, what is the purpose of education; second, what role do the sciences and the professions have in liberal education; third, what ought to be different about the shape and purpose of education at a Catholic university; and fourth, what are the distinctive qualities of our own university?

When we ask what is the purpose of education, we enter into a discussion that has been engaged in since the beginning of recorded history of civilization. Plato thought education should produce good persons who acted nobly. St. Thomas Aquinas believed its goal was the love of God and of neighbor. Rousseau thought it should bring students to realize their unique potential as individuals. And Jane Addams argued it was the basis for democracy and community. In 1928, the administrators of the University of Notre Dame stated that, as far as they were concerned, they hoped to "cloister a boy for four years from the ways of the world and . . . give him a demonstration of the workability of [their] principles," and then "send him out ready to pay tribute to Caesar without losing his soul."

In the spring of this year, the president of the American Association of Colleges, John W. Chandler, noted that religiously affiliated universities may be more successful in assisting students in the exploration of "those religious worldviews and life-styles that challenge the consumerist and self-aggrandizing norms that dominate our national life." He argued that "those institutions that are rooted in particular religious traditions possess a heritage that relates to some of the deepest questions their students are asking."[3] For us at this university, I would suggest that our vision of education must include both the head and the heart, both the highest of academic standards and the deepest of religious insight. We aim to educate not only good people who act nobly, but also educated people who act wisely. We aim to graduate people who in loving God have come through that love to love others more generously, and have come to dedicate themselves to the formation of communities of support and conscience. With Rousseau, we want our students to discover their potential, and with Jane Addams we want them to discover that potential through lives lived in the service of others. Finally, we educate to enable our students to be in the world, but not of it, to discard, in the words of Newman, what is irrelevant, to see things as they really are, to speak so that others may always learn, and to act so that others may always benefit. In short, the purpose of education in the tradition of this university is to pursue both academic excellence and religious integrity while building a community that dedicates itself to service.

Secondly, I ask what Newman's description of the liberally educated person has to do with an education in science or the professions. With the rise of science, particularly after Newman's contemporary Charles Darwin, a great division of opinion rose up over the purpose of education. Should education be based on the curriculum of traditional humanistic studies such as philosophy, history, language, literature, and the fine arts? Or, given the rapid growth of modern science, should education concentrate on training in such disciplines as biology, chemistry, and physics? This debate has been described in C.P. Snow's *The Two Cultures* and by Lawrence Biondi, SJ, in "Educational Aims of the Liberal Arts Curriculum: Contextual Education," in *Jesuit Higher Education* published by Duquesne University Press.

The issue was first directly joined in nineteenth-century England by two great educators, Matthew Arnold and Thomas Huxley. For Arnold, the truly educated person knew "the best which has been thought and said in the world." Arnold believed that the only way one could learn the best of thought and of writing was through an education in the humanities, especially literature. Huxley disagreed, believing that all truly educated persons needed to understand the workings of their world. For Huxley, the only effective way to acquire such understanding was through the study of the natural sciences.

Newman did not eschew the study of science, but he did not wish to give it the central role that Huxley wanted it to assume. What should our stance be on this question? Were we to focus all of our energies and devote all our resources to liberal education alone, at least in the sense that Newman understood liberal education, we would fail in preparing our students for the world into which they must enter and in which they must make their way. At the same time, Huxley's view seriously underestimates the perennial relevance of a

liberal education, the role which Newman expressed in greater depth and with greater comprehension than did Arnold. Suffice it to say here that to be liberally educated, to be prepared to meet and shape the world of this century and the next, every student needs to grasp the principles of scientific inquiry, the key insights of scientific research, and the various languages that science speaks.

A common fallacy of educational thinking asserts that a liberal education is synonymous with the humanities. Nothing could be further from the truth. As Giamatti stated a decade ago,

> a liberally educated mind is precisely one that has composed itself sufficiently to experience the thrill, the deeply satisfying, rousing excitement, of seeing a mathematical solution move to the same kind of inevitable, economical fulfillment of itself as does a great sonnet; one that can derive the same pleasure from discerning and absorbing the nature of a pattern in matter as in a painting or in market behavior; that can find the same satisfaction in applying the results of technological experiments as in applying any other kind of knowledge, for the betterment of humankind. The imagination, the capacity to discover or impose a new shape with the mind, is the province of science as much as of any other form of human investigation. And the power of the imagination is finally the energy tapped and transformed by an education.[4]

I conclude that an essential part of a liberal education in this century must be an introduction to the methods and principal discoveries of modern science. Following this line of thinking, we ask professional educators to embrace the liberal spirit. Many corporate and industrial leaders have recently underscored the critically important roles that should be played by the study of the humanities. At this university, we believe that professionals educated in a liberal spirit will be leaders of their professions.

Third, how are these observations about the purpose and content of education embodied distinctively at a Catholic university? Over 50 years ago, John Dewey devoted his three Terry Lectures to the relationship between religious belief and American culture. Dewey described an increasingly intense opposition between the religious convictions that had been an integral part of Western culture for two millennia and the rapid rise of a new epistemology of science. The conflict had, in his view, produced a "revolution in the seat of authority." Now more than ever, Dewey claimed, there was within American culture "but one sure road of access to truth—the road of patient, cooperative inquiry operating by means of observation, experiment, record and controlled reflection"—namely, the scientific method.[5]

Dewey believed he was witnessing a revolution because religious belief, he thought, would collapse before the advance of the scientific method. "The growth of knowledge and of its methods and tests has been such as to make acceptance of these [religious] beliefs increasingly onerous and even impossible for large numbers of cultivated men and women."[6] As far as Dewey could see, the culture of American intellectuals increasingly removed itself from any belief in God. I think there is much truth in the description Dewey has offered.

At the basis of the scientific undertaking is a commitment to a "paradigm"—a commitment which itself is not scientifically proven or even probable. This fundamental point has been made abundantly clear by Thomas Kuhn, Ludwig Wittgenstein and others. If, then, we take the view that only what can be scientifically proven is worthy of our assent and can justifiably ground our behavior, then science itself—the undertaking so much admired by Dewey and proposed by him as a substitute for religious faith—is itself a religion. And there are reasons to doubt that this modern form of faith is powerful enough and rich enough to replace the motivating force of Christian religion as our ultimate and time-tested paradigm.

Perhaps the quasi-faith commitment that the scientific method presupposes is the reason why the pervasive religious alienation among the well-educated recorded in studies reaching back to 1913 in this country is registered less among scientists such as physicists and chemists than among other intellectual elites, particularly social scientists and, ironically, humanists. The practitioners of the hard sciences, that is, the very people who have had first-hand experience of the fruitfulness of the scientific paradigm, are today less sanguine than Dewey about its ability and role. The limited realm within which science bears its splendid fruit may be inadequate to guide and motivate us through the hazardous maze of our lives.

Pope John Paul II has frequently called for a dialogue between faith and culture. The ordinary Catholic, the ordinary priest or bishop or even theologian, does not know enough of modern intellectual culture to sustain a meaningful dialogue with scholars on contemporary poetry, on social history and ethnography, on deconstruction in literary criticism, on determinism in biology or feminist theory in literature, on causality in subatomic physics or electro-optics, on the latest thinking in the sociology of knowledge and the limits of artificial intelligence and expert systems.[7] But in a Catholic university we have scholars who understand these fields and activities, and who are committed as well to the Catholic intellectual tradition. Therefore, the most important task that a Catholic university performs is to be an intellectually rigorous community in and through which contemporary culture meets reflective faith. What differentiates a Catholic university from any state university is not that one has free discourse and the other

does not. "The difference lies with the kinds of questions that are given priority and the kind of knowledge that is judged most worth having."[8] Our Catholic character does not lie primarily in our campus ministry or our liturgical celebrations, though they grace our life together in special ways. The Catholic character of this university lies first in the sorts of questions to which we give priority. And, of course, those questions arise out of our deepest commitments and convictions as faculty.

And what are these commitments, these convictions? "Deep within the Catholic tradition is the conviction that human dignity and worth before God transcend all considerations of wealth or competitive skills or accomplishments, that the main purpose of law and structures in society is to protect and sustain persons and not property, to promote community and not exclusivity." Deeply ingrained in our tradition is "the sense that cooperation is a more basic and more comprehensive category of human relationship than competition."[9]

When he received the Marianist Award here in January 1989, Fr. Walter Ong stated that if scholarship "is truly Catholic, it will seek to understand the whole of actuality. It will keep itself moving on a quest which is impossible to realize entirely but which is promising always, and often exhilarating." At its very best, the Catholic intellectual tradition draws upon both reason and faith, and assumes that the sharpening of the intellect deepens one's beliefs. It opposes, in a word, all forms of reductionism. It seeks instead to grasp reality as a whole, never excluding the spiritual, the communal, or the cosmic.

Fourth and finally, what are the strengths, the distinctive qualities of our own university? All that I have already said comes together here to describe the real strengths of the University of Dayton. Consider the following: This university's academic reputation has grown rapidly in the past ten years. Its faculty and staff are recognized for excellence in research, not only nationally but internationally as well. Our commitment to a well-thought-out general education program for all our undergraduates has been recognized nationally and supported by several generous grants. Our shared commitment to liberal education has brought together dedicated faculty from the schools and the college to seek ways to graduate students who enjoy more than a mere acquaintance with the liberal arts. Conversation and appreciation across disciplines, perhaps drawing strength from Marianist tradition, foster a degree of community which is instantly recognized by every visiting accreditation team. You are a faculty of great strength and unusual harmony.

You, our faculty, are genuinely committed to research and teaching, and dedicated to the total education of our students. On both the graduate and undergraduate levels, students enjoy unusual opportunities for collaboration with you in research at the cutting-edge of your disciplines. And you have associated yourself into work-groups the warmth and luster of which attract excellent new faculty.

Brother Fitz's leadership in the planning process and his personal example, along with the contributions of other academic leaders, have produced a shared vision and a striking degree of coherence.

We are blessed with a deep and diverse religious tradition from which we can freely and usefully draw in all of our intellectual endeavors. In reaching for greater academic excellence, our Marianist traditions keep us focused on community, service, and our commitment to every one of our students, thereby avoiding individualism, careerism, and elitism.

As a comprehensive university, we provide educational opportunities for our students both in the traditional disciplines and in the professions. We enjoy greater diversity than if we were only a college and greater flexibility than if we were only a research university. Our campus is beautiful, its setting attractive and the facilities well kept (or scheduled for imminent renovation).

We stand, I believe, at a threshold. We have the opportunity, if we use our resources wisely, to focus our mission more sharply, and commit ourselves to the great exigencies of our profession as educators, truly to become a great comprehensive Catholic university.

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1. A. Bartlett Giamatti, *Free and Ordered Space*, (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1988), 127-128.

2. John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*, Discourse VII, edited by Martin J. Svaglic, (South Bend, University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), 134-135.

3. "President's Message," *Liberal Education* (March/April, 1990).

4. Giamatti, 148-149.

5. Michael J. Buckley, SJ, "Education Marked With the Sign of the Cross," *America* (September 1, 1990).

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Buckley, "Research Across the Disciplines" in *In All Things*, edited by Robert Daly (Sheed and Ward, 1990), 210.

9. Monika Hellwig, "Reciprocity and Vision, Values and Community," in *The Catholic Church and American Culture*, edited by Cassian Yuhaus (Paulist Press, 1990), 82.

# ANNUAL MEETING PAPERS

The following five papers were given at the ACCU 1991 Annual Meeting in Washington, DC, at which time the tenth Theodore M. Hesburgh, CSC, award was presented to Walter J. Ong, SJ, of Saint Louis University.

# The Catholic Imagination and The Catholic University

Andrew M. Greeley

I will suggest tonight that it is a role of the Catholic university (in which I would include the Catholic undergraduate college) to reflect on the Catholic imaginative tradition. It is a very modest suggestion. I do not say that this is the only role of the Catholic university or its most important role or a role that is unique to it. Nor do I suggest that it is a function of a Catholic university to contribute to the continuation and enlargement of the Catholic imagination, though I presume that such a contribution would almost inevitably happen in a environment where there was rigorous and scholarly reflection on the Catholic imaginative heritage and/or the creative exercise of it. Finally I do not suggest that such reflection and creation is not occurring on Catholic campuses. Whether it is or is not is an empirical question about which you would know more than I do.

All that I am saying is that when one wanders on to a Catholic campus one would expect to find among other things a propensity to reflect with appropriately intellectual rigor (depending on the specific activity involved) on the Catholic imaginative heritage. Or if one comes upon a campus which has enough Catholics on its faculty to please the Vatican and there is no reflection on the Catholic imaginative heritage, then one might well wonder whether this campus has any right to be called Catholic.

To tip my hand just a little I would add, perhaps *sotto voce*, that to reflect on the imaginative heritage is to reflect on what is in the raw and primordial sense the essence of Catholicism. Catholic poetry antedates and exceeds Catholic prose.

To achieve my purpose I will outline my theory of the Catholic imagination and then suggest, very tentatively, some ways in which reflection on this imagination might occur on the American Catholic campus—again note the modesty (perhaps finally only apparent) of this latter effort. My suggestions will

be tentative, illustrative, and surely non-exhaustive.

*Father Greeley is a faculty member in the Department of Sociology at the University of Arizona and research associate at the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago.*

The theory can be stated in the following premises:

1) Religion begins in (1) experiences which renew hope, these experiences are in turn encoded in (2) images or symbols which become templates for action, are shared with others through (3) stories which are told in (4) communities and celebrated in (5) rituals. This model is a circle, not a straight line, and hence the stories, communities, and rituals in their turn influence hope renewal experiences.

Because we are reflective creatures we must reflect on our imaginative religion. Because we are creatures who belong to communities which have heritages we must critique our imaginative religion to make sure that it is within what the community has traditionally taken to be its boundaries. Creeds, catechisms, theological systems, even teaching authorities are an inevitable and essential result of reflection on and critique of experiential religion. I do not want to deny the importance of intellectual religion. I am merely saying that religion takes its origins and its raw power from experiences, images, stories, community, and ritual and that most religious socialization (transmission) takes place through narrative before it takes place in non-fiction. Religion must be intellectual but it is experiential before it is intellectual.

Jesus was a story teller; the parables are the essential Jesus, they share with us Jesus's experience of the generous, hope-renewing love of the Father in heaven (who, be it noted, in the stories of Jesus loves with a mother's forgiving tenderness as much as she loves with a father's vigorous protection).

The Jewish tradition is passed on especially in the stories of the Holidays and the Passover. The Catholic tradition is passed on especially in the stories of Christmas and the Christian Passover. Maybe half our heritage is transmitted to children around the crib at Christmas time—and especially in the wonderfully mysterious explanation of the Incarnation to little kids that Mary is God's mommy.

2) The analogical or Catholic imagination, to summarize and simplify Tracy, emphasizes the presence of God in the world. It perceives the world and its creatures and relationships and social structures as metaphors,

sacraments of God, hints of what God is like. I often illustrate the theory by noting that Catholics have angels and saints and souls in purgatory and statues and stained glass windows and holy water, and an institutional church which itself is thought to be a sacrament. Protestant denominations, on the other hand, either do not have his imagery or do not put so much emphasis on it. The Catholic imagination is defined by the practice of devotion to Mary the Mother of Jesus. To fall back on the mother tongue, *ubi est Maris, ibi est ecclesia catholica.*

One side leans to the direction of immanence, the other leans in the direction of transcendence. Which is better? Neither. Which is necessary? Both.

The analogical and the dialectical imaginations are not mutually exclusive. No individual is completely possessed by one or the other, nor does any denomination or group have a monopoly on one or the other. The two imaginations represent propensities, tendencies, emphases, or in the lexicon of my own discipline modest but statistically significant correlations.

My sociological research confirms the theory of the analogical imagination. In twelve countries, Catholics and Protestants do have different images of reality which are encoded in different images of God. Catholics do indeed tend to picture creation and human society as metaphors for God. The Catholic religious experience does tend to be sacramental (or incarnational), Catholic symbols are indeed analogical or metaphorical, Catholic stories tend to be comedy, the Catholic community tends to be structured and organic (in Durkheim's sense of the word), and Catholic rituals tend to be celebratory.

3) Thus a young Catholic growing up absorbs cues about his religious tradition from many different sources and in many different forms. Formal religious instruction, the writing of theologians, and the pronouncements of the Vatican are among the voices s/he hears, but these largely propositional voices are heard long after the more imaginative and, if you will, poetic voices of parents, family, neighbors, parish clergy, and local community. The Catholic imaginative heritage is transmitted to a young person usually in great part before the person encounters any formal religious education—and cannot be undone by such religious education.

This is not a particularly revolutionary notion. If you leave aside for a moment the religion classes in which you learned or which you have taught and reflect on your own absorption of Catholicism you will, I think, acknowledge that it was a process something like the one I have described: You heard the poetry before you learned the prose. You had listened to the stories before you encountered the institution (for which you may want to add "Thank God!")

My friend Father Edvard Schillebecyx admits ruefully in a long autobiographic interview that his first memories of Catholicism are of the scene around the Christmas crib. He apologizes for that experience. A great theologian Edvard is, but about the importance of religious images he understands very little. One never apologizes for Christmas.

4) Like all symbol and narrative systems, the Catholic imaginative tradition is dense, polyvalent, multilayered. Its logic is poetic rather than deductive. One can find different and even contrasting cues in it depending on the experience of family life (for example) with which one approaches it or the different ideological biases one seeks to confirm (consider to how many different uses the symbol and the story of Mary the Mother of Jesus have been put). In general however, the Catholic imaginative heritage has enormous appeal ("once a Catholic, always a Catholic") because at its best moments it tends to be warm, supportive, filled with wonder and affection, and grateful for the goodness of nature and human relationships (their "sacramentality" if you wish). "Wherever the Catholic sun does shine/there is music, laughter, and good red wine./ At least I've always found it so/Benedicamus Dominio."

Most Catholics like being Catholic. They do not want to give up their Catholicism—the experiences, the images, the stories, the communities, and the rituals of their precognitive heritage, and in fact most of them don't give it up, come what may.

The defection rate of those who were born Catholic and who no longer define themselves as Catholic is today 15 percent in this country, precisely what it was thirty years ago. Having done all in their power to drive the lay people out of the church in those thirty years there is nothing left that the Catholic leadership can do which will drive them out. Presumably they will keep trying.

5) This fact brings me to my final premise: In any conflict between propositional Catholicism, whether imposed by theologians, liturgists and religious educators on the one hand or the teaching authority on the other, and imaginative Catholicism, the latter will win going away. Mind you, propositional religion is essential because we are reflective beings. Hence, theology, liturgical theory, and religious education as well as the corrective judgments of the teaching authority are necessary (as they would be in any community shaped by a heritage) to critique and reflect upon experiential and imaginative religion. Nonetheless these necessary reflective behaviors, if they are to serve any useful purpose, must be carried on with awareness that the origins and raw power of religion are to be found in the poetic rather than the prosaic dimension of the self.

It would be well if all the propositional teachers on both the left and the right would understand the depth, the antiquity, the tenacity, and the appeal of the heritage with which they often try to mess.

The classic confrontation between propositional Catholicism and imaginative Catholicism in recent years focused on the issue of marital sex and birth control. The teaching authority in effect said that erotic pleasure

between husband and wife could be justified only if procreation was a possibility. Married people knew that the erotic love of husband and wife was sacramental (most would not have used the word) and that God approved of it. They understood as the Vatican did not how important such love is binding a man and woman together and healing the wounds of the common life. Given a choice between what the teaching authority said on this subject and what their own Catholic instincts told them about the sanctity of married sex, they chose the latter, confident that God would understand.

Many liturgists and religious educators assume (as does the presently reigning pope) that the Catholic laity are spirit-less and grace-less victims of materialism, individualism, secularism, consumerism, and the rest of the demons of the contemporary Catholic elites and must be fashioned into Christians by being forced to learn a new vocabulary and jumping through various liturgical and instructional hoops. Since the laity want the sacraments they'll play these games but will promptly forget what they have been taught when the games are over.

Some clergy and some Catholic architects impose on the laity (who must pick up the tab) so-called "liturgically correct" parish churches which "don't look like Catholic churches" (according to the lay folk) but do look very much like Quaker meeting halls. In the absence of stained glass windows, stations of the cross, vigil lights, the crucifix, and, above all, Mary and the saints, such a church will almost surely turn off lay people who will depart in droves for parishes which have churches which do look Catholic.

I fail to understand why it is necessary to eliminate the imagery of the Catholic past. I do not believe that such imagery is incompatible with quality contemporary art. In such controversies (and they are endemic in the church today) neither liturgist nor architect display any sense of the richness or the strength of the Catholic imaginative tradition as it is incarnated in the laity.

What the hell is wrong with statues of the saints and Herself? After all she does represent the womanliness of God, does she not?

Indeed at a more general level, it often seems that in their contempt for the ordinary faithful many Catholic elites are utterly unaware of the ancient, appealing, and pervasive religious culture in which the faithful live. It takes a certain kind of blindness to ignore such an obvious and enormous culture, but those who would reduce a religious tradition to its institutional and propositional manifestations have already donned their blinders.

Obviously the imaginative tradition requires different tools of reflection in this era than it did in past eras. Just as obviously it must be reexamined so that is can grow and expand (my thesis indeed is that the Catholic campus is one of the locales for such growth and expansion). But both reflection and reexamination must take place in a context, first of all, of awareness of the tradition and, secondly, of respect for it.

Catholicism was not born in 1965.

My theory, like all social science theories, is a model for examining reality, a tentative and provisional description of it with no claims to either uniqueness or exhaustiveness. It is subject to modification and revision when it is tested against new data.

To summarize this model: a distinctive Catholic religious culture extends beyond the boundaries of institutional religious propositions, a Catholic poetry which is wider, richer, and deeper than Catholic prose, a powerful and pervasive symbol system (*pace* Clifford Geertz) which purports to offer ultimate explanations in narrative form for creation and for human life and death. This culture or, if you wish, subculture may be pictured as a repertory of images for giving names to the phenomena of human life. It exists only partially in most individuals and communities and perhaps perfectly in few or none. It is not absolutely unique and coexists with strains of other religious subcultures, many of which it subsumes. Yet it is different, if not totally different, and Catholics name reality differently, though not totally differently, than do others.

One can prove by statistical analysis, I believe, that there is this rich, dense, complex, and appealing Catholic religious culture. One can speculate, with solid grounds I believe, that this heritage is wider, deeper, and far more powerful than any propositional statement of it. One can also reasonably speculate that the heritage is passed on informally in small group contexts long before propositional religious socialization begins. Finally, one can suggest with considerable persuasiveness that the Catholic religious imagination is the matrix and the context for virtually all Catholic ministerial and pastoral work.

But we can only guess in our present state of knowledge about the shape of this culture, the relative importance in it of the various stories and rituals and symbols, and the poetic logic which provides it with organization and structure. We can study high culture for hints of the shape and the metaphorical logic of this tradition, so long as we understand that high culture is more revelation of a slice of the Catholic imaginative heritage in a given time and place (and among members of a given group, like Italian American film makers for example) than it is a force in shaping that heritage. Dante did indeed shape some of the development of the Catholic imaginative heritage with his vision of Purgatory (a story which somehow we seem to have abandoned lately, just at the time that the makers of films like "Flat Liners," "Ghost," "Always," and "Jacob's Ladder" have discovered it—to say nothing of D.M. Thomas in his novel *The White Hotel*). However, more importantly he revealed one segment of that culture at a particular point in human history. He was a sacrament of the heritage.

The tools of modern social science enable us to create

a road map, a respectful road map I hasten to add, of the Catholic imaginative heritage as it exists today among the lay people of God. Such a research effort would be both very difficult and not unsurprising if found on a campus which lays claim to being Catholic.

This suggestion is an appropriate transition from my sketch of a theory of the Catholic or sacramental or analogical or incarnational imaginative heritage to five suggestions of how one might reflect on this heritage in a Catholic college or university.

1) The most obvious kind of reflection is that which once seemed to exist in super-abundance on the Catholic campus, research about and courses on the high culture component of the Catholic imaginative heritage—"History of Catholic Art," "Nineteenth Century Catholic Poets," "Recent Catholic Fiction," "French and English Catholic Novelists of the First Half of the Twenty Century," "Current Catholic Film Makers" (I think of Lee Lourdeux's wonderful book on the Catholic ethnic influence on Capra, Ford, Coppola, and Scorcese).

I have the impression that the Catholic college used to be proud to offer such courses and now is often just a little ashamed to offer them. Perhaps my impression is wrong.

Or let me put it a little differently in two rhetorical questions to Father Buckley. Could a young person really claim to have had a Catholic, to say nothing of a Jesuit, education if s/he has not read and reflected on and perhaps even committed to memory Hopkins' *May Magnificat*? Or should it be possible to attend a university whose Marian name is celebrated (by the Fighting Black Baptists) every Saturday afternoon in autumn without having been exposed to the possibility of a course on the art and symbolism of Mary the Mother of Jesus?

Considering the extraordinary good fortune of the Fighting Black Baptists on a number of Saturday afternoons this last year, it would seem to me that such a course would be a matter of gratitude if not of strict justice. Mr. Holz and company certainly kept the poor woman busy.

2) Hence the second reflection I would suggest as a possibility would be on Mary and the saints. The Mary story is, if not *the* privileged symbol (in Paul Ricoeur's sense of the term) of the poetic logic of Catholicism, at least *a* privileged symbol, a key to understanding the whole system. Those elites who concentrate on the propositional and institutional elements of the Catholic tradition on the right have turned the Mary story to dry dogma or sweet saccharin and on the left have ignored the Mary story altogether in the fervent hope that it would go away. Both responses to the Mother of Jesus, I would suggest, are perilous—not to the Madonna who is alive and well but to the elites. If one does not understand the most powerful religious narrative in fifteen centuries of Christian history, one understands nothing at all about Catholicism.

Similarly the saints, whose lives as Ken Woodward has recently pointed out in his *Making Saints*, are stories of God's love, are marvelous material for both classroom instruction and for scholarly research. I note that the leading publisher of lives of the saints today is the University of Chicago Press and that the first book which attempted computer analysis of medieval saints (and with considerable success) was written not by a faculty member of a Catholic university but by my colleague Don Weinstein of the University of Arizona.

3) I would also propose for reflection the traditional Catholic social theory, outlined by Aquinas, developed in the last century by such Jesuit scholars as Liberatore and Taparelli and in this century by Oswald von Nell-Breuning, and expounded by Popes Leo XIII and Pius XI. This theory with its emphasis on society as an ordered and cooperative system, like Dante's *Commedia*, is more the result of an underlying Catholic imagination than the cause of it. Poetry again shapes prose much more than the reverse. The Catholic imagination sees human society as a sacrament, however flawed, of God's love and therefore seeks a third way between Hobbesian individualism and Marxist collectivism. The core of this Catholic theory is the principle of subsidiarity—nothing done by a higher or larger organization that cannot be done as well by a lower or smaller one. The Catholic social theory was once well understood on Catholic campuses but for the least twenty-five years has been replaced by the collectivism of liberation theology or the big government approach of those who write the bishops' pastorals. The principle of subsidiarity is cited by the latter only to justify government intervention without any regard to its implications for decentralization of control.

Now that the gods of Marxism have collapsed with the falling Berlin wall (I suspect that the last Marxist in the world will be a Catholic priest with tenure—arguably Jesuit—doggedly teaching liberation theology at a Catholic university), it might be appropriate to begin again to reflect on a communitarian social theory which advocates decentralization instead of centralization and which is rooted in a vivid imaginative picture of human society as sacramental.

The Catholic social theory is nothing more than a formalized and generalized articulation of the instinctive response of those in the grip of the Catholic imagination. The politician who believes that political power ultimately grows, not out of a barrel of a gun, but out of voting decisions in the precincts has an organic image of society even if he does not know the word. The good precinct captain and the good parish priest have the same image of social action—one must be out on the streets listening more than talking, out with the people in the smallest units of society in those places where men and women live, love, raise their children, reconcile, worship, and die.

4) This observation points to another possible area for

reflection—the unique American Catholic experience of immigration into the neighborhood parish, surely one of the most extraordinary forms of community that human ingenuity has ever discovered; within the neighborhood parish the parochial school is one of the most effective techniques for generating and supporting local community that humankind has ever used. These are empirical generalizations and not merely personal opinions by the way. Yet the American Catholic elites for the last five decades have reflected on everyone else's experience but their own—French, German, Dutch, Latin American. I am not suggesting that we should lose interest in other manifestations of Catholicism but only that it would be useful to also be interested in our own. Moreover it is almost a requirement for admission into the elites to contemn the parochial school.

I am aware of Jay Dolan's first rate historical work on the parish, but if there is any other high quality research on the development of parishes I do not know of it. I am, I think, pretty well informed about research on Catholic schools, and none of it is being done on Catholic campuses. There are a few chairs of urban or ethnic or labor history, but not very many. A couple of years ago I recommended to a president of a Catholic university a very distinguished specialist in the literature of the American Irish. "We already have an ethnic historian," he replied. One apparently was enough.

As in the other areas I recommend for reflection on the Catholic imagination, I not only mean to imply that a Catholic University *has* to have more than one ethnic historian. Rather, I would have thought that it *wanted* more.

5) If religion is image and story before it is anything else and if Catholicism has the richest imaginative tradition of any of the religions of the Holy One, then one might expect to find artists, poets, and writers in residence on the Catholic campus—men and women who would manifest concretely how the religious imagination works. I note that Jon Hassler, whose fiction is now nationally recognized, is writer in residence at Saint John's University in Minnesota. There are I am sure other such, though I am unaware of them. I also note that Seamus Heaney was at Harvard and Cezlaw Milosz at Berkeley. The chance of there being an Irish American Heaney or a Polish American Milosz would be enhanced if students could brush shoulders with such men and women.

The shape and structure of the Catholic imagination, Catholic high culture, Mary and the saints, the Catholic social theory, the specifically American dimension of the Catholic experience (which would include especially the parish and parochial schools) and the presence of creative artists and writers on campus—none of these are obligations for the Catholic university which wants to promote reflection of the Catholic imagination. They are rather opportunities. The last five would be opportunities even if you reject completely my theory of the Catholic imagination.

Incidentally, none of them would require new buildings or laboratories or substantial financial outlays, save perhaps for the empirical research on the Catholic imagination itself. But even the last would cost relatively little. Moreover, I suspect that the courses which would flow from such emphases on the Catholic campus would attract large numbers of students and that scholars in these fields would pay for themselves merely from instructional fees.

My illustrative examples are from the social sciences and the humanities, the areas which I know best. But it would seem to me that both the cosmological issues with which my Jesuit colleagues at the University of Arizona wrestle and the leading edge biological issues about the organism directing its own evolution also provide interesting possibilities for Catholic instruction and scholarship.

My suggestions for a role (not the role) of Catholic colleges and universities are, as I said before, modest—much less grandiose than the vision of the rather dreary and tiresome document the Vatican has recently produced and surely much more modest than some of the claims made by Catholic administrators for their institutions.

While modest, though, my suggestions may have the merit of being feasible.

Am I daring to suggest that the sociologist is more important than the theologian, the college professor, and, heaven save us, the bishop. Rather I am saying that all are equally unimportant (though still equally necessary) when compared with the poet, the artist, the story teller, the mystic, the saint.

Those of us who work in whatever form with the institution and the proposition must finally realize that while our slice of the pie is critical, it is not comprehensive, and that we can no longer afford to ignore the rest of the pie. The prose writer must listen to the poet. The institutional leader and the theologian must listen to each other and to the story teller.

The request is the final modesty. All one asks of the prose writers or the professors or the bishops or the university presidents or the lords of the curial dicasteries or the liturgists or the architects or the religious educators is that they listen. Presumably none of us will hold our breath until this happens.

# The Church and its Responsibility to Foster Knowledge

Michael J. Buckley, SJ

Father Greeley has given an insightful and eloquent appeal for reflection upon things Catholic—for a retrieval within the Catholic universities of the richness of the Catholic symbolic experience. I can only second his appeal. But the task that Alice Gallin and Tim O'Meara have assigned me bears upon a different question, one that Mr. O'Meara framed in this manner: Should the church foster learning that is on the face of it secular? More specifically, should the church encourage, yes, even nurture as part of its own mission research into the physical and biological sciences? This question could obviously be extended further—into the social sciences, the professions of law, business, and medicine, even the humanities—but 45 minutes demands that I limit my compass. Father Greeley has argued the thesis that the Catholic university must foster things Catholic. Mr. O'Meara's question comes almost by way of complementary counterpoint: Should the church as such be vitally engaged in the knowledge that is neither intrinsically Catholic nor immediately religious?

## *I. THE SPECIFICATION OF THE QUESTION*

Let me spend some initial moments in specifying this question. Mr. O'Meara has not asked if the Catholic university precisely as a university should foster the physical and biological sciences. The answer to such a question would be obvious—if the institution wishes to be a university. Rather the issue is whether the church, precisely as such, should foster these sciences. Is there something about the nature and mission of the Christian community that underscores those obligations incumbent upon the university as such, something about the church which uniquely supports the common responsibilities of higher education and which would give added meaning and warrant to the remarkable proposition of the present pope that the church needs the university.[1]

But is the answer to such a question not a banality? Do not the dogmatic commitments of the church emphasize that creation is a gift? Does this sense of gift not mean that we should pay attention—even in the most disciplined and serious manner—to what God has entrusted to us?[2] Has not the church insisted since the attack of Manichaeism that the world is good and that matter and history are the stuff of salvation? Does not creation give obvious importance and even a religious dimension to the work of science? And has all of this not been repeated a thousand times!

Let me counter with agreement and disagreement. There is something generically true about such a response—but that constitutes its fatal flaw and the easy deceptiveness about the response. It offers us a comfortable journey down what R.S. Crane called "the high priori road"; i.e., assuming the relevance and authority of theoretic doctrines prior to the examination of concrete issues and evidence.[3] It does explain why Christianity has exhibited a pervasive sympathy for nature and for the disciplines with which it is explored. But this explanation remains at a level so abstract that it does not touch our actual issues as they have emerged in the crises within history, nor does it reach the level of obligation—"should the church"—at which our question has been posed. To be satisfied with it is to be informed by neither recent history nor current concrete Catholic practice.

Can any Catholic recall without blushing, for example, the papal brief on Darwinism: "A system," wrote Pius IX, "which is repugnant at once to history, to the tradition of all peoples, to exact science, to observed facts, and even to reason herself would seem to need no refutation, did not alienation from God and the leaning to materialism, due to depravity, eagerly seek support in all this tissue of fables."[4] Does not the same shame rise when one recalls that the works of Copernicus and Galileo remained on the *Index of Forbidden Books* into the nineteenth century? Can we not remember that the volumes of Teilhard de Chardin were ordered removed from the shelves of Catholic libraries within our own life-time? All of this is common knowledge, so common that it undermines something of the credibility of the church and feeds the extravagant myth of an inherent antagonism between science and religion. Each year

*Father Buckley is professor of philosophy, theology, and of the history and philosophy of science at the University of Notre Dame*

freshmen courses in Western Civilization retrace something of this path laid by some religious leadership. But not just freshmen! Are Catholic university presidents unaware that at the very end of the last century, the first president of Cornell University, Andrew Dickson White [1832-1918], compiled case after case of such repression in his massive 1896 work *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*?

Science in abstracto and science in the day-by-day—the church has a long history of positive affirmations ranging from benignity to significant assist; but the great revolutionary changes in science have sometimes met misunderstanding, resistance, and even repression—not just by church leaders, but by theologians and manualists. Perhaps the key here is "misunderstanding." These moments were often the result not of viciousness or politics—though this could not be extended to the Galileo fiasco—but to an intractable narrowness, an ignorant misreading, a positive paranoia before novelties which were equated with threat: "Nihil innovetur nisi quod traditum est," was easily extended to the constitution of the world and the nature of its origins. But here the paradox becomes more acute. The heliocentric universe was condemned by some theologians and ecclesiastic authorities not because they failed to understand Copernicus, Kepler or Newton, but because they failed to understand the Book of Judges or the accommodation principles of Thomas Aquinas. Fear arose about evolution because ecclesiastics like Henry Edward Cardinal Manning judged it "a brutal philosophy—to wit, there is no God, and the ape is our Adam."[5] It was often a decadent theology and barren philosophy that constructed these artificial antinomies or which failed to mediate between the gospel and the developing culture. Here, as often as not, the issue lay not so much with the new sciences as with a theologically sound understanding of the basic patrimony of the church that alone could make novelties welcome and mediation possible.

So the question—if it is not to be a banality—can be honed more precisely. Should the church, as such, foster science, science even at its most inventive moments, science when its conclusions seem raw or when it opens a frontier that seems to contradict what has been accepted even as dogma, when a synthesis has not been made between faith and science in this new area of inquiry? It is not simply obvious that the church should foster such knowledge. Nor is it simply regressive to see it undermining the belief of ordinary Catholics. In pursuit of its responsibilities, church authority has looked at the concrete effects of such knowledge and sometimes inhibited such research and teaching as "confusing the faithful."

But one need not become unfair or hysterical over this history. The church has contributed enough encouragement to science in general during these centuries, and the caution that ecclesiastics have exhibited can find its secular counterparts with the efforts of American universities to deny the dangerous doctrines of Professor Shockley a hearing or with the unspoken demand for politically correct opinions, or with the establishment as departmental orthodoxies a particular version of analytic philosophy or literary criticism, or with the prolonged unwillingness even to entertain the original theories of Alfred Wegener about plate tectonics. The problem is a profoundly human one, not exclusively an ecclesial one. But our ecclesial history does furnish added weight to our question: Should the church as such encourage and foster all genuine and ethical scientific inquiry no matter where it seems to be tending? I say "ethical" deliberately because I am concerned in these remarks with dogmatic compatibility, not with the more technological uses or experimental inquiries of science that raise serious questions of morality and ethics.

But our question is sharpened still further if we consider the present attacks on science within American higher education, attacks that issue from the challenge of deconstructionism, that are mounted in the name of egalitarian leveling of all "logocentric hierarchies," that are embodied in what is present and what is omitted in the current university conflicts over a canon of appropriate texts or the content of a core curriculum.[6] All of this makes Mr. O'Meara's question more real: Why should the church, even before pockets of academic indifference or hostility, encourage and support a passion for scientific inquiry?

## *II. THESIS 1*

As a response, I should like to advance two theses: (1) In one way or another, contemporary scientific inquiry raises serious questions about ultimacies and so constitutes part of the present religious problematic; (2) The scientific passion for the truth about the world is a part of that general passion for truth that makes faith—any vital faith—possible. One of my theses deals with science as a body of knowledge, as a content; the other deals with it as a method or procedure and a habit of mind. Let me explore each of them in the time that has been allotted to me.

Over the past 30 years, the relationship between the physical sciences and the religious dimensions of life has radically altered. One can better assess this sea-change if it is seen in contrast with the intellectual settlements between science and religion since the dawn of modernity. Drawing these intellectual covenants in very broad brush strokes, I would suggest that these centuries have seen four significantly different relationships: subsumption, separation or isolation, alienation, and correlation. Let me say a shamefully brief paragraph to illustrate each.

*Subsumption*: In the 17th and 18th centuries, natural philosophy or physics or experimental science was sub-

sumed as the foundation for religion, most specifically for the assertion of the existence of God. Certainly this was the interest that drove much of Isaac Newton, but one can also find it at the concerns of such scientific giants as Robert Boyle and John Ray and in the resultant physicotheologies of William Derham and William Paley. The evidence from physics became those of geometrical design and functional subservience, and the mathematics embedded in the universe pointed to a universal geometer. Foundational religious reflection often looked to science for its warrant to assert its fundamental assertions about God.

*Separation*: Under Laplace and Lagrange, physics and astronomy freed themselves from furnishing the foundations for religious assertions. William Herschel recorded the conversation between Napoleon, then first consul of France, with M. de Laplace on August 8, 1802. The subject was the sidereal heavens, and Napoleon asked in a tone of admiration: "And who is the author of all of this?" Laplace maintained that a series of natural causes could account for this phenomenon. "This, the First Consul rather opposed." The story has been simplified by having Laplace respond to Napoleon with the celebrated retort: "I have no need of that hypothesis," and then maintaining that Laplace's astronomy was atheistic. That interpretation is false. Laplace is simply saying, in opposition to Newton's *System of the World* and to the "Queries" at the end of Newton's *Optics*, that science was self-contained, that it would not furnish the basis for religion.[7] The new settlement was to be between two distinct, isolated, and methodologically indifferent fields.

*Alienation*: In the 19th century, the evolutionary theories of Darwin and Wallace were read as eliminating both the classic argument from design as well as a special place for human consciousness, a consciousness that both philosophers and theologians had made integral for the establishment of the existence of God. Many religious leaders and scientists read this development as a fundamental change in the relationship between science and religion; i.e., as an attack and contradiction. With such rare exceptions as John Henry Newman, they understood it basically as threat. Cardinal Wiseman received permission from the Holy See to found an academia, one to which he summoned the faithful of England in these words: "Now it is for the Church which alone possesses divine certainty and divine discernment, to place itself at once in the front of a movement which threatens even the fragmentary remains of Christian belief in England." In his Terry Lectures, John Dewey in the United States announced that religious belief with any supernatural content could not survive before the surge in the empirical sciences. During the important Solvay Conference of 1927, Dirac and Pauli expressed amazement to Heisenberg that Einstein could evince any respect for religious consciousness.[8] Our own generations grew up in that atmosphere of hostility and alienation and—because of our ignorance of history—were indoctrinated easily to talk about the "ancient" battle between science and religious.

But within our lifetime, this settlement has begun to give way before an unexpected development. Increasingly, scientists such as P.W. Atkins, Robert K. Adair, and Harald Fritzsch find themselves in basic agreement with the theoretical physicist, Paul W. Davies: "Right or wrong, the fact that science has actually advanced to the point where what were formerly religious questions can be seriously tackled itself indicates the far-reaching consequences of the new physics." In fact, Davies claims quite flatly: "It may seem bizarre, but in my opinion, science offers a surer path to God than religion."[9]

This is no place to survey the evidence that Davies and others mount, but this much must be said. The way the contemporary world reveals itself in its fundamental constitution and origins poses or suggests enormous questions of ultimacy, even if (*pace* Davies) it does not answer them. This is neither unprecedented nor extraordinary; what is extraordinary is the growing recognition that this is the case. Any human situation, explored with careful discipline and examined in depth, raises questions of ultimacy for which the methodology at hand is unequipped. This can occur in two ways: First, it discloses problems about its own foundations, about the validity of its own presuppositions, the reference claims that can be made for its axiomatic sets, its postulates, and finally its relationship to other kinds of knowledge. Second, a thorough scientific inquiry may well establish conclusions which themselves raise further questions or hint toward further knowledge which its own methodology cannot responsibly treat. Such an inquiry may suggest possibilities about the universe which it cannot responsibly explore. It has classically been the function of metaphysics to deal with the first of these sets of problems; i.e., to inquire into the foundations of science and of mathematics and into the relationship of one area of knowledge with another. But is it the second inevitable development of scientific knowledge, the questions about ultimacy and about receding horizons that it raises, which inevitably involves the interest of religion. For religion, or the disciplined reflection upon religious experience that we can call theology, is essentially about the ultimacies, the absolutes that impinge upon human existence and that elicit a possibility of the world embodying mysteriously the personal interchange between the divine and human.

Let me give one example: If one looks at the fundamental constants of nature, one comes to see the universe as breath-takingly, unimaginably finely tuned. For example, as Stephen Hawking has written, if "the rate of expansion one second after the Big Bang had been smaller by even one part in a hundred thousand million million, it (the material universe) would have recollapsed before it reached its present size." If, on the other hand, the rate of expansion had been ever so slightly

greater, the expansion would have been too great for stars and planets to form. The universe would have been impossible.[10] That fine-tuning can be found in such fundamentals as the mass of the electron, the strength of the strong nuclear force, the relationship between matter and anti-matter. This number of such "remarkable coincidences" can admittedly be advanced indefinitely.

Some are using these data, as did Boyle and Newton to establish an argument for the existence of God. This seems to me misguided. But what I do think is legitimate —not to say hypnotizing—is that at the very minimum they raise the question about purpose and personality in the universe. Such evidence gives a new basis, a new plausibility to the question: Is there then mind and purpose, even a care for human beings, at the basis of our existence?

Now the reaction to this kind of knowledge or recognition among theologians and thinkers within the church has been threefold. The vast majority, knowing nothing about science, wary, suspicious or at best respecting it at a great remove, are ignorant of these developments or of their enormous importance in our understanding of the world. Consequently, they cannot appropriate the character or the contours of this problematic situation that contemporary culture is framing for religious inquiry and responses. The second, enthusiastic about this new knowledge, join those scientists who enlist these data to ground religious affirmations about the existence and nature of God. This seem.s to me a categorical error, one that mingles different kinds of knowledge and repeats the errors of the seventeenth century. But the third reaction has been to treat this new knowledge in one field as constituting a set of problems, questions leveled at religion. The cosmological constants—the emergence of life, the appearance of consciousness, expansive if not directional evolution—raise the possibility of profound purpose in this universe of some eighteen billion years.

This raises in a very different way the question of God—in a new and newly very plausible way. Does not the church which talks about God and Christ, even the cosmic Christ, about providence and salvation, have a way of taking up these issues, transposing them into properly theological questions and in terms of theological methodologies and evidence dealing with these in a way that the physical sciences cannot? It is consequent upon the mission of the church that it foster, encourage, and be in vital contact with scientific inquiry not because science will answer the questions of religion, but because it poses some of them.

For in scientific inquiry, the world progressively discloses itself. Theological research, investigation, and instruction will only be as vital as the questions they address. These questions will possess vitality to the degree that they emerge out of life. Science easily constitutes one of the greatest and most continual efforts of the human intellect to push to its ultimate what we know about our world and about our lives. The church can and must encourage the advance of this knowledge, confident that the reach of the mind will extend into a profoundly religious dimension—that questions will be elicited that the science or the discipline itself cannot resolve. For science in so many different ways mediates the world to religious consciousness. As that world becomes progressively engaged—whether in molecular biology or astrophysics or cosmology or quantum mechanics, it will raise issues not merely about the social and ethical implications of what is discovered—matters of enormous moral interest to the church—but about the meaning or purpose in the universe, the pervasiveness of matter, the eschatological destiny of all that we know. The church must foster science as a body of knowledge because it must engage the religious dimensions of this selfdisclosure of the world. For such a disclosure through its questions evokes new insights into the significance of the gospel and the concrete meaning of the One in whom and through whom and for whom all things were made.[11]

We advance in our understanding of the unique Christological significance of salvation as we understand the world to which Christ is the immeasurable response—as He is seen to respond to the questions that the physical universe and human life pose about existence and meaning.

Understood in this way, science forms part of the problematic situation for contemporary theology. If the church wants the mystery that it bears taken seriously and if it wants to come to deeper understanding of this mystery itself, then the church must foster all those human engagements in which ultimate questions are uncovered in depth and presented with urgency and which cry out for a religious transposition and theological reflection. If, on the other hand, the church ignores these developments—and how many members of CTSA or of your theology departments have anything that could qualify as scientific literacy?—then theology loses the vitality that this contact with culture can uniquely offer. One can advance this first thesis slightly further: If one really understands only the answer itself when one has grasped the question—if the response becomes clear only as one sees something of what is its fundamental question, then one can ask the church and its theologians how much they understand about the gospel (i.e., the recapitulation of all things in Christ) when they do not see or understand so much of the world to which it is response and good news.

That is the first thesis I wish to defend: The church must encourage or foster science because science done with integrity constitutes something of the problematic situation which confronts the reflection, yes, even the self-understanding of the church.

## *III. THESIS 2*

May I now use the time I still have available to advance a second thesis. Here I do not intend to deal with science as an expanding body of knowledge, but as a habit of mind issuing in a methodologically selfconscious, exact and demanding exploration of the world in order to determine what is true about it. I take it that this is the purpose of science, no matter how different and no matter how instrumental may be its best available conclusions. I take it that this is where the almost hypnotic appeal of the scientific enterprise lies, whether its effort be bent on solving problems of tensor calculus or building a multibillion-dollar super-conducting supercollider, whether it be purely theoretic in its interests in subatomic physics or technologically oriented towards global warming and space stations. There can be an addictive appeal in learning what is the case, what is the solution to a problem, what is the truth about things. This dedication constitutes the scientific mind at its finest. Not just the scientific mind, of course, but the scientific habit is one generic form of this dedication, one of its strongest forms in contemporary culture.

I am as aware as you of the vanity and the vicious competition, of the ego-investments and financial greed that can and has entered into this world. But there is at its best—a best which the church must encourage and reverence—there is a grandeur, a purity of heart, a self-transcendence that the scientific mind calls for, a profound orientation towards the truth. In this orientation, it seems to me, one encounters the absolute; i.e., that which is directive and normative of all life and is itself not governed or subject or relative or dependent upon anything else. This may not necessarily emerge in the conclusions of the work of the scientist, but the decencies of his or her calling dictate that it be always operative in the uncompromising claim that truth makes upon the direction that this work takes. Truth is both the horizon towards which the scientist moves and the imperative that directs her or his choices. The scientist, as a scientist, is called upon to explore what is the case in as imaginative and as disciplined a form as possible and to tell the truth that his research discloses with a disciplined exactitude.

Now, in order to focus my argument at this point, I should like to direct your attention to what may seem a very dry and inconsequential proposition in Thomistic theology. It is the very first issue that Aquinas raises when he deals with faith. He asks this question: What is the formal object of faith? In other words, what is the indispensable aspect under which you must see what you are asked to believe, that aspect by which something becomes credible and which entails the inescapable commitment for making an act of faith? And he answers this very simply. The formal object of faith is the primary, the absolute truth [II-II.1.1]. Christian faith for Aquinas is not a blind leap in the dark; it is not opposed to cognoscitive rigor, nor does it constitute a voluntaristic *sacrificium intellectus*. "One would not believe if she/he did not see that these things were to be believed" [II-II.1.4. ad 2]. You believe something because you believe someone; and you believe someone because you believe that he/she speaks the truth. The grace of faith, he says very simply, "makes one see the things that are believed" [II-II.1.4. ad 3]. The content of your faith and the source of your faith are conditioned by this absolute or primary commitment—an uncompromising, non-negotiable commitment to the truth: "nothing can fall under faith except so far as it stands under the first truth" [II.II.1.3]. It is in this way that faith does not contradict intellectual activity, but "brings understanding to its completion" [II-II.1.3. ad 1]. Only this commitment to truth can make authentic faith possible: both the commitment of God to its revelation and the surrender of a human being to its absolute primacy.[12]

I suggest that under that seemingly dry proposition of Aquinas he is proposing an understanding of Catholic faith that makes the church's encouragement of zealous, self-sacrificing science a matter of crucial moment. To evoke authentic faith, the church must foster in every possible way an uncompromising commitment to the truth, in whatever way it discloses itself. The Christian community must give itself to build a world in which truth is explored, disclosed, and spoken. The church itself must be understood—or come to be more vitally—the place where truth is reverenced and demanded and spoken. For this openness to the real—whether one of physical nature or of mathematical coherence or of biological and human nature—this acceptance of what is simply because it is is a fundamental condition for the possibility of Christian faith. As this disposition dominates the scientific mind—and the church must encourage it to be faithful to itself—as it governs and directs a person's entire career, as it permeates teaching and drives research through difficult, discouraging and dogged moments, as it works against the vices and the narrowness that make for dishonesty and pretense, as it counters a defensive unwillingness to face up to the way things are, such a disposition develops in the mind those habits which are essential if faith is to be authentic. For the finest reaches of the scientific mind lie in an undeviating determination towards the truth; and from the time of Paul it has been said that the failure in faith is basically a "failure to love the truth and be saved" [2 Thes 2:10].

It is of vital importance that the church encourage, demand, propose, or foster every serious engagement by which human dedication and its consequent effort engage itself with an enterprise whose purpose is truth.

And what must the church ask at those crisis-moments when scientific inquiry and dogmatic assertion seem to clash, when they even appear to contradict? That both continue their inquiries or experiments, their discussions and reconsideration without impediment or

mutual condemnation, as Cardinal Newman wrote, "with full faith in the consistency of that multiform truth, which they share between them, in a generous confidence that they will be ultimately consistent, one and all, in their combined results though there may be momentary collisions, awkward appearances and many forebodings and prophecies of contrariety."[13]

In my opinion, one could argue even further that this costly love for truth is not only a disposition for faith but as it becomes absolute and universal constitutes that universal surrender which Karl Rahner has signaled as transcendental faith: the obedient acceptance of God revealing Himself as the all-guiding, all-governing truth, permeating all things, giving meaning and urgency to its smallest participation and confronting one continually in a relationship of absolute closeness and summons. The day-by-day honest drudgery of science could well constitute the categorical mediation of such transcendental revelation and its responding faith.[14]

## *IV. CONCLUSION*

I have attempted to answer Tim O'Meara's question with the two theses that these pages have only been able to outline. Each of them needs more development and nuance, but the basic point is this: The church must encourage scientific inquiry as it must care for the sources of its own vitality. It must both foster an undeviating determination for the truth wherever this occurs as the only matrix out of which Christian faith can emerge, and it must further those disciplined inquiries whose natural dynamism develops into those profound questions or suggestions about ultimacy that constitute the religious dimensions of life and reach towards the unspeakable mystery that is God.

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1. Pope John Paul II, "The Church Needs the University," March 8, 1982, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition (3 May 1982), 6.

2. See the remarks of Ian G. Barbour, *Issues in Science and Religion* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1966), 44-48. The matter can be framed through a simple parable: If a young man loves a woman, he may show his love by giving her a ring. Now there are many things which the woman can do. The most vicious would be to take the ring and forget the love that is behind it. That would be the most vicious—but it would not be the most stupid. The most stupid thing she could do would be to think that the ring and the man were in competition—that it was not a sacrament of his love but its competition—and that somehow or other she could show her love for him be denigrating the ring: "What a lousy piece of metal—only eight caret diamond—how little worth it has compared with you, honey!" One does not enhance one's relationship with God by despising or ignoring the gifts that God has given as a pledge of an eternal love.

3. R.S. Crane, "Criticism as Inquiry; or, The Perils of the 'High Priori Road,'" *The Idea of the Humanities* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), vol. ii, 29.

4. Cited by Andrew Dickson White, in "The Final Effort of Theology," as in *Darwin*, selected and edited by Philip Appleman (New York: W.W. Norton, 1970), 366. These papal briefs are printed in full in Constantin James, *Mes Entretiens avec l'Empereur Don Pedro sur le Darwinisme* (Paris, 1888), see *Darwin*, 367, n.2.

5. Henry Edward Cardinal Manning, *Essays on Religion and Literature* (London, 1865), as cited in *Darwin*, 364nl.

6. John Searle in his recent "The Battle over the University," noted the general lack of a coherent theory of undergraduate education and spoke with amazement of one of the most recent and best attempts to build such a theory, *The Voice of Liberal Learning* by the English philosopher Michael Oakeshott:

> "Perhaps the biggest single weakness of his conception of education is in the peripheral status it assigns to the natural sciences. The natural sciences do not fit his model, because, for the most part, the world of the natural sciences is not a world of meanings. It is a world of things; it is a world of entities, such a s molecules or quarks, and forces, such as gravitational attraction or electromagnetic radiation. . . . But like it or not, the natural sciences are perhaps our greatest single intellectual achievement as human beings, and any education that neglects this fact is to that extent defective." *The New York Review of Books* (December 6, 1990), xxxvii:19, 41.

7. See Michael J. Buckley, *At the Origins of Modern Atheism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990, paper), 325.

8. See Michael J. Buckley, SJ, "Religion and Science: Paul Davies and John Paul II," *Theological Studies* 51:2 (June 1990), 311-312.

9. Paul Davies, *God and the New Physics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), ix.

10. See Ian Barbour, *Religion in an Age of Science*. (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1990), 135.

11. Colossians 1:16-17

12. St. Thomas is not alone in giving this sacred, religious character to such a commitment. William James, in defending however successfully, his description of personal religion insisted that "a man's religion might thus be identified with his attitude, whatever it might be, towards what he felt to be the primal truth." [William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Penguin, 1987 - reprinted from the standard edition of Longmans, Green, and Co., 1902), chapter ii, 34.] In her autobiography, Simone Weil summarizes what gave meaning to her life: "It seems to me certain, and I still think so today, that one can never wrestle enough with God if one does so out of pure regard for the truth. Christ likes us to prefer truth to him because, before being Christ, he is truth. If one turns aside from him to go toward the truth, one will not go far before falling into his arms." [Simone Weil, "Spiritual Autobiography," *Waiting for God* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 69.]

13. John Henry Cardinal Newman, "Christianity and Scientific Investigation," *The Idea of a University*, edited with introduction by I. T. Ker (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 375.

14. See Karl Rahner, Foundations of Christian Faith. *An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, translated by William V. Dyke (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 152.

# How is Intellectual Excellence in Philosophy to be Understood by a Catholic Philosopher? What has Philosophy to Contribute to Catholic Intellectual Excellence?

Alasdair MacIntyre

The questions which your association's invitation to me posed are ones that might tempt a speaker into easy generalities. What, from a distinctively Catholic standpoint, is intellectual excellence? How in particular should a Catholic conceive of intellectual excellence in philosophy—the philosophy of professional academic philosophers? What does philosophy have to contribute to the overall intellectual excellence of a Catholic university of college? It would be difficult to reply with a set of formulas, some of which might even be true. But general formulas that we do not know how to apply to particular situations are empty. And a recognition of the serious difficulties that we in our present condition would confront in trying to apply them is a first prerequisite for constructing more useful answers.

To say this is not to say something that holds only of philosophy. Catholic academic philosophers, like their colleagues in other disciplines, still have much work to do on these questions, but they are perhaps in a better position than some others, since the work that has to be done in discovering how best to think about intellectual excellence, whether in general or in natural science or in theology or whatever, is always in significant ways philosophical work. So I begin both with a certain agnostic modesty about my or anyone else's ability to answer these questions and also with what may seem disciplinary arrogance about how we ought to proceed. Yet this is a kind of philosophical work to which all of us in universities and colleges, philosophers and non-philosophers alike, are going to have to contribute as part of our Catholic duty. For as Catholics we are already committed by the affirmations of our faith to certain positions within philosophy about excellence, to holding, for example, that standards of good and evil, of the excellent and of the defective, are what they are independently of anyone's desires or preferences; that standards of excellence must be such that they can be shared by a community, transmitted through the activities and teaching of a community, and rationally defended both within and outside that community; and that we have to understand these standards as God-given, with all that that implies. But we cannot move from these initial commitments towards an adequate practically usable conception of intellectual excellence without engaging in a large-scale enquiry, something that in a meeting like this we can only gesture towards. For any adequate account of intellectual excellence, in philosophy or elsewhere, will be part of a theory of the virtues. And any adequate theory of the virtues will be itself part of some larger philosophical view of the practical and moral life. So here I can do no more than ask in what direction ought we to begin to move if we are to discover what we need. I begin by rejecting two answers. The first would have been found compelling to most Catholic philosophers in this century before Vatican II; the second, although not often made explicit, is presupposed in the attitudes and activities of many philosophers who are Catholics today. Each is a distortion of a truth and, if I begin by emphasizing the distortion, is in the interests of coming to terms with the truth contained within it.

As you very well know, for the greater part of the period from Vatican I to Vatican II the translation of generalities about intellectual excellence in philosophy into the concrete and specific terms of a generally shared theory of the virtues was achieved for the Catholic community at large and for Catholic philosophers in particular by neo-Thomism, a development of the thought of Aquinas, through which Catholic philosophers provided themselves with a common sense of direction and a philosophical agenda, both prerequisites for shared standards of disciplinary excellence; thereby Catholic philosophy of the late nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth century was enriched by a continuous

*Dr. MacIntyre is the McMahon-Hank Professor of Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame.*

return to the texts not only and preeminently of Aquinas, but also of Aristotle, Plato and Augustine. What the extraordinary achievements of the neo-Thomistic period should have taught us—among much else—was that it is only against the background of such a shared direction, agenda, and reading of texts that defensible shared judgments of intellectual excellence can be made. Take away the kind of framework provided by neo-Thomism, and in particular take away its understanding of the virtues, and we no longer have the resources to make such judgments, unless we fall back upon whatever happen to be the current standards of the secular professionalized academic world, something which, so I shall argue, Catholic philosophers have good reason not to do.

Yet, as we also all know, it is a matter of historical fact that the neo-Thomistic framework became unavailable. It did so in part because of two important defects in it, one response to which in North America has been a significant assimilation of Catholic philosophers to the rest of their academic profession, both in the kind of directions which their work has taken within philosophy and in the standards of excellence by which they judge and are judged. What were those defects and how did they come to result in this kind of assimilation?

First, a counterpart to neo-Thomism's large success in organizing the activities of Catholic philosophy in Catholic universities and seminaries within a shared moral and intellectual framework, thus defining the relationship of the philosopher to the Catholic community in a way that was mutually rewarding, was its correspondingly large failure, for the most part, to enter into adequate dialogue with secular academic philosophy. Catholic philosophy too often isolated itself and at its worst caricatured its positivist or idealist or materialist opponents, sometimes announcing victory after a series of mock-battles with straw men.

Secondly, when at the end of the nineteen fifties there was a radical change in cultural climate in Europe and North America and a counterpart change in the Catholic community, neo-Thomism failed to retain the allegiance of those who were to become most influential in Catholic higher education, including philosophy. Excellent philosophical work continued to be done by individual Thomist philosophers, but Thomism seemed to have become no more than one philosophical option among a number of others. Thus, what had been an established framework within which standards of achievement in Catholic philosophy were set, and standards of excellence upheld, not only failed to vindicate itself by its lack of influence upon the issues and debates of contemporary secular academic philosophy but also for a mixed bag of reasons, some bad, some good, lost its power to set shared recognizable, and defensible standards of intellectual excellence for Catholic philosophy.

Some Catholic philosophers understandably, but potentially disastrously, turned as a consequence of this rejection of Thomism to the only other set of common standards still generally available to them, those of professionalized academia. Insofar as they did so, they became committed to denying that in academic philosophy, at least, there is any need for specifically Catholic thinking about intellectual excellence. An excellent Catholic philosopher is reconceived as no more than an excellent philosopher, who happens also to be a Catholic. What then *is* excellence in philosophy? It is whatever happens at this or that particular moment to be judged outstanding ability in the most prestigious departments of the great secular research universities. And it is unsurprising that a tendency to adopt this view has occurred in a period in which the avowed aim of the administrative leaders of some of the best Catholic universities was to make their institutions as like Harvard or Princeton as possible. So the abandonment of Thomism, and more specifically of a Thomistic understanding of the virtues—including the virtues of intellectual excellence, and the ambitions of administrators reinforced each other to produce what turns out to be a seductive but quite inadequate view of intellectual excellence, a view which nonetheless has provided a basis for tenure and promotion decisions in a significant number of Catholic universities and colleges. There is of course something right as well as something wrong in this view. What is right is the recognition that excellence in philosophy is not one thing for Catholics and another for non-Catholics. It is not one thing for me and another for my non-Catholic colleagues. Moreover it is always crucial that the standards and problems of contemporary secular academic philosophy should be taken with great seriousness by Catholic philosophers. What is wrong is the capitulation to a professionalized view of philosophy in which the exercise of technical skills on the currently fashionable problems of whatever school of thought happens to be dominant is given an exaggerated importance. Richard Rortly has described, for example, what he takes to be the "ideal of philosophical ability" recently dominant among analytic philosophers as that of an ability *both* "to spot flaws in any argument he hears" *and* "to construct as good an argument as *can* be constructed for *any* view, no matter how wrong-headed." (Philosophy in America Today' in *Consequences of Pragmatism* University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1982, p. 219). What such a view presents and fosters is a dissociation of intellectual skills from intellectual and moral virtues, of a kind all too characteristic of our culture in general; and that is to say, it is at odds with Thomistic Aristotelianism and with Catholic theology in upholding a conception of excellence in philosophical activity specifiable independently of that final end of truth to which philosophical enquire moves, *and* of those moral as well as intellectual virtues without which that end cannot be attained. Not all professionalized philosophy of course is analytic philosophy, but each type of professionalized philosophy has it own characteristic inadequacies.

We therefore seem to find ourselves at an *impasse* in our search for shared and recognizable standards of intellectual excellence in philosophy; those formerly provided by neo-Thomism are now too generally unavailable and those provided by contemporary secular professional conceptions of philosophy are gravely defective. How then should we proceed?

We know initially two things: First, that as Catholics we are unlikely ever to have a more adequate paradigm of philosophical excellence than that which Aquinas provided through his engagement with the philosophy of Aristotle, both in his life and in this thought, and through his development of that engagement into a decisive restatement of the central philosophical theses and arguments of traditions of thought which had reached him from a variety of Greek, Christian, Jewish and Islamic sources—we still, that is to say, need to listen very carefully to what *Aeterni Patris* has to say to us; and, secondly, that any contemporary response to Aristotle or to Aquinas which does not treat the best of recent non-Thomist philosophy with the same seriousness with which Aquinas treated the Latin Averroists is doomed to the same self-enclosed isolation which—justly or unjustly—did so much to discredit neo-Thomism. But how are we even to begin to do this? One way to begin, perhaps indeed the only way to begin, is by learning from those Catholic philosophers who in their philosophical work have already provided models for us. I think at once of two outstanding examples, those of Professor G.E.M. Annscombe and of Edith Stein, neither of them Thomists, although both have written about Aquinas.

Elizabeth Anscombe's work in philosophy had from the outset certain salient characteristics. As a pupil of Wittgenstein who through her later translation and editing of his writings was one of those responsible for making them part of the contemporary philosophical canon, she learned not only how to pose new questions for philosophy but also how to understand them as reopening older questions. So in her book on Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* she argued that in order to identify correctly the questions posed by Wittgenstein and earlier by Frege, one not only has to break with established preconceptions but in so doing to recognize that "The investigations prompted by these questions are more akin to ancient, than to more modern philosophy," and she alludes in a footnote to a problem central to both Plato and Wittgenstein. (*An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus* Hutcheson: London, 1959, p.13).

In her seminal book on *Intention* (Blackwell: Oxford, 1957), she simultaneously put Wittgenstein and Aristotle to the question in an extended argument, which among other things reestablished the central importance to the philosophy of mind and to moral philosophy of Aristotle's theory of practical reasoning. In her subversive paper on modern moral philosophy she undermined some central assumptions of modern secular culture both inside and outside philosophy. The central virtues of her writing appear first in the range and discriminating complexity of her responses to the great figures of philosophy, next in the insightful toughmindedness which so often both carries an argument beyond the point where others were able or willing to take it, but in such a way as to incite us to go further still, and finally in her trenchant and unsentimental articulation of what needs to be said by a Catholic philosopher at key points on which the teaching of the church and philosophy both bear: faith, authority, whether and how war can be just, the relationship of sexuality to procreation.

Yet praising those virtues of Anscombe's philosophical writing which make them an important example of intellectual excellence to us all in this very general way could actually distract us from what we need to learn from them, which is where and how to situate ourselves concretely in philosophy, so as to make possible for as many students and teachers as possible the kind of intellectual excellence in philosophy about which we, as Catholics, ought to care. What that is we can best understand by looking at what her work has in common with that of another Catholic exemplar of excellence in philosophy, Edith Stein, later Sister Teresa Benedicta a Cruce.

At first sight Anscombe and Stein may seem very different types of Catholic philosophers, the one for most of her life a fellow of an Oxford college and from 1970 until her retirement occupying the Chair of Philosophy in the University of Cambridge, the other unable, after her doctorate in 1916 and her subsequent work, as Husserl's teaching assistant at Freiburg and as editor of his manuscripts, to obtain any academic appointment in Germany, only because she was a woman. And their philosophical starting-points were also very different, Anscombe's as a pupil of Wittgenstein, Stein's as a pupil of Husserl. But for our present purposes the resemblances are what matter.

Each found the combination of philosophical independence of spirit with unqualified obedience to the *magisterium* unproblematic. Each began as a student of someone who had offered a diagnosis of the failure of modern philosophy to solve its problems and resolve its disagreements by embarking on a radically new kind of philosophical investigation. And each was able to recognize, to a degree that other students of Wittgenstein and Husserl were not, how within that new kind of investigation was to be found a partial return to older questions, so that, just as Anscombe brought Wittgensteinian insights to a reopening of Aristotelian questions, Stein brought Husserlian insights to a reopening of Thomistic questions, something that she achieved most fully in *Endliches und Ewiges Sein*, which she wrote as a Carmelite nun. This is a work which a few Thomists have praised, but it has effectively been ignored. And I am tempted to understand this marginalizing of Stein's philosophical

writings as a symptom of just those weaknesses in neo-Thomism which contributed to its displacement.

What then do we have to learn from these examples? First perhaps, that if we want to understand Catholic intellectual excellence, examples developed in a detail which I cannot achieve here may in our present situation be initially more useful than definitions, although only of course if we choose the right examples. And in a too often mediocre intellectual culture such as ours we are all too apt to be victimized by the wrong examples. What the right examples, such as those of Anscombe and Stein, have to teach us is however clear: that intellectual excellence in philosophy now requires that we take as our starting-point a conception of what is now problematic in philosophy, which reiterates the questions posed by the greatest of recent philosophers, that is, by Husserl in his realist period and by Wittgenstein, not in order to repeat, even if in elaborated form, their answers to their questions, but in order to bring their questions with us to the task of reinterrogating Aristotle and Aquinas. Only so may we hope to engage in new and effective forms of philosophical dialogue with that tradition which extended from Socrates to Aquinas, and beyond to the great medieval and renaissance commentators, a tradition which it was always the ambition and to some extent the achievement of the neo-Thomistic revival to reestablish and to develop still further. A Thomism which does not in this way respond to the problems and questions of the greatest of recent philosophers has no prospect of making a further major contribution either to philosophy or to the Catholic community; but, equally, a commitment to the best of recent philosophy which fails to return us to Aristotle and to Aquinas will deny us the only possibility that we have of putting ourselves in touch once more with that traditional philosophical framework without which, as we ought to have learned by now, so much of Catholic practice in the secular world becomes unintelligible and atrophies. We need, that is to say, a new and very different kind of Thomistic revival. A large part of the Catholic community since Vatican II has attempted to find substitutes for what it took to be, sometimes with good reason, inadequate in the ideals of excellence, intellectual and otherwise, which informed the neo-Thomistic understanding of theory and practice. But the time has come to recognize that this attempt has failed. What we need is neither the old neo-Thomism nor the new eclectic incoherence, but a different kind of Thomism.

Nowhere is this more needed than in the theory of the intellectual, moral and theological virtues, the place to which we ought to be able to resort in order to recover a genuinely contemporary account of those virtues, applicable to practice inside and outside the Catholic community, within which we would find what we in universities and colleges most need: a detailed, specific and particular account of the virtues of intellectual excellence and their relationship to the other virtues. The tasks involved are centrally philosophical. Philosophy will of course have to draw upon the resources of other disciplines, including both theology and literary and historical studies. But what philosophy alone can supply on these matters by itself justifies the important and central place in the curriculum traditionally assigned to philosophy in Catholic universities and colleges. This last contention is of course controversial to the degree that my understanding of what philosophy in a Catholic context now has to do—that is, once again, as in sixteenth century Spain and Portugal and as in nineteenth century Italy, Germany and France, to become Thomistic in yet another new way—is itself controversial. And it inescapably is.

For I am well aware that those of you are Thomists will have been provoked into disagreement by what I said earlier about the failure of neo-Thomism and that the rest of you, non-Thomist or anti-Thomist, will now have been equally provoked by my call for a new Thomistic revival. When there is no one left in an audience to antagonize, it is always a good time to stop. And so I now do.

# Catholic Intellectual Excellence: Science and Technology

Alice Bourke Hayes

In the spirit of Saint Louis, I thought I'd begin with a short quotation from a great non-scientific document, *Life on the Mississippi*. Huckleberry Finn and Jim are floating on their raft down the Mississippi, the symbol of innocence and unspoiled nature.

> Well, the night got gray and rather thick, which is the next meanest thing to a fog. You can't tell the shape of the river and you can't see no distance. It got to be very late and still, and then along comes a steamboat up the river. We lit the lantern, and judged she would see it . . . . We could hear her pounding along, but we didn't see her good till she was close. She aimed right for us . . . . She was a big one, and she was coming in a hurry, too, . . . all of a sudden she bulged out, big and scary, with a long row of wide-open furnace doors shining like red-hot teeth, and her monstrous bows and guards hanging right over us. There was a yell at us, and a jingling of bells to stop the engines, a powwow of cussing, and a whistling of steam—and as Jim went overboard on one side and I on the other, she come smashing straight through the raft.[1]

This story, so close to our childhood and to our hearts, could be a model for the common view of technology—the simple raft and the treacherous steamboat, the threat of destruction, the sense of being helpless before the onslaught. The threat was real; the raft was destroyed by the steamboat. Today, a trip down the river on a steamboat is considered a placid event. As frightening as it was to Huckleberry Finn, it's a vacation for us. We recognize from our safe distance of 100 years that the development of steamboat transportation had a significant effect on communication between the South and the Midwest, and we realize the cultural enrichment that occurred. We aren't frightened by the steamboat any more and can enjoy the beauty of a trip and the literature it has inspired.

*Dr. Hayes is provost and executive vice president of Saint Louis University.*

You could tell this story with different villains, but the common elements would remain. Today, we face a veritable flotilla of steamboats—nuclear waste, acid rain, pollution, world hunger, global warming, genetic hazards, reproductive engineering, in vitro fertilization, societal change. How do we live with this, and what is the role of the Catholic scientist in shaping a future in which the human and the divine are enhanced? Will scholars 100 years from now look back and find that these challenges, these threats, which are real and could destroy our fragile rafts, have in fact provided opportunities for human enrichment and spiritual growth?

The scientist tries to understand nature, to learn how its forces and products work. What scientists learn becomes part of our comprehension of the human person, the forces and features of nature, and our concept of God. And what scientists learn becomes applied to produce new technologies. Thus, science and technology provide new insights and new options for humanity. Scientific theories, poetry, painting, sculpture, the law, steamboats, lasers, computers, are things made. They are products of the human mind and heart and hands. The more the mind and heart informs the hand, the more we tend to view the things made as art. The more the hand serves the mind and heart, the more we tend to view the things made as technology. The essential thing to remember is that technology is not a product of an alien world. Technology is not imported from Mars or made by the Keebler elves. It is not value-free, or autonomous, or beyond human control. It is a product of the human mind and hand.

In fact, we recognize the presence of the human species by the evidence of things made. An archaeologist defines a site as human when artifacts—roads, houses, statues, pots, evidence of agriculture, irrigation systems, and so on—are found. When we classify fossils as hominid, we look not only at the bones, but also at the evidence of high skill in the things made, cave paintings and flints, and recognize that the same skill that chips a flint to make a handaxe also shapes the stone to make a religious figurine.

Science and technology are the result of intellectual activity, and any discussion of Catholic intellectual life

should include these perspectives. There is no special Catholic insight to the law of gravity or the structure of enzymes. There is no such thing as Catholic physics or Catholic chemistry. Science does not propose or pretend to prove theological concepts. Scientists understand the world in a different way. Today I would like to discuss (1) the differences between the intellectual approaches used by scientists and the religious modes of thought which are the primary source of the Catholic intellectual vision; (2) the impact of scientific insights on the Catholic vision and vice versa; and (3) some concerns about the role of science and the scientist in Catholic intellectual life.

First, the models, the shape of our thoughts. As Fr. Thaddeus Burch has pointed out, scientific models differ in almost every important respect from the models used in religion which have so influenced the development of Catholic intellectuals.[2]

The models differ in scope. Religion attempts to understand all of reality; God, humanity, the cosmos, and their relationships. Scientists would like to understand all of reality but do not propose that scientific methods can do so. Steven Hawking's recent book on the history of time (which is, astonishingly, a best seller) is often cited for the suggestion that if we just knew the grand unified theory we would understand the mind of God. But Hawking doesn't propose that science alone will give this insight. Since this statement of Hawking is so often quoted in part, let me quote it in full, " . . . if we do discover a complete theory, . . . Then we shall all, philosophers, scientists, and just ordinary people, be able to take part in the discussion of the question of why it is that we and the universe exist. If we find the answer to that, it would be the ultimate triumph of human reason—for then we would know the mind of God."[3] Hawking does not suggest that the right set of equations in a grand unified theory would tell you "all you ever wanted to know" about God, but that it would enrich the discussion. The most the scientist claims to understand is a part of reality, that part which is accessible by scientific inquiry.

The models differ in their source of knowledge. Religion uses divine revelation and reason, and the modes of reasoning used are primarily analogy and logic. The relationships studied are qualitative. Knowledge is tested in the same manner in which it is gained: by revelation and reason. It is considered valid if it is endorsed by the magisterium. It can even be declared infallible by the pope.

Scientific knowledge is based entirely on reason, and the modes of reasoning used are primarily founded in experiment and mathematics. These methods do not give certain knowledge, nor is it ever claimed. Scientific knowledge is always considered provisional. The relationships discovered are primarily quantitative. Knowledge in the sciences is tested by the ability of new ideas to explain and predict, and a concept is held as valid until it is negated. Although we describe the regularities observed in nature as laws, a scientist would not suggest that any of our ideas are infallible.

Because of the way in which knowledge is gained, changes in basic tenets or new discoveries are not really anticipated in religious study. We don't expect to find an 11th commandment or to change a major doctrine. However, the scientist expects to find new insights. This is a major difference between the two kinds of knowledge. It results in a very different attitude towards statements, which in science are always subject to question and in religion are usually not. The difference is more theoretical than actual, since scientists may work within a paradigm without challenging its major assumptions, and since religious knowledge does grow and new insights are found. The difference is that there is little expectation of change in the vision of the church, and indeed change is usually resisted. This helps explain some of the events in the history of the interaction between the church and science.

Religious knowledge commands deep personal commitment. The martyrs staked their lives on their beliefs. Scientific knowledge does not command that kind of commitment. One could argue that, in a sense, the first astronaut staked his life on Isaac Newton's theories, or that every time we take medication or submit to surgery we stake our lives on scientific knowledge. Still, we would readily change medication or lunar modules in the light of new information. In the sciences, the primary commitment is not to the idea; it is to the process.

We all seek truth, but it is a different truth. The Catholic vision must be true to revelation. The scientific vision must be true to material fact or mathematics. The values that arise from the methodology of the scientist are Old Testament values: truth, justice, integrity. The Catholic vision emphasizes a New Testament perspective of love and freedom. As different as science is from traditional Catholic thinking in scope, methodology, mindset, values, and virtues, Catholic intellectual life must include the issues raised by the sciences in the vision that reflects revelation.

As Jacob Bronowski observed, "The moral problem of our century is to make the values of science as much a part of our lives as are the values which religion and literature have long glorified. We must learn to build a complete morality, in which love no longer fights against truth in our unconscious thoughts. For our weakness is that we think that love and even goodness are threatened by truth . . . ."[4]

Pope John Paul II recently said, "Science can purify religion from error and superstition; religion can purify science from idolatry and false absolutes . . . . The unprecedented opportunity we have today is for a common interactive relationship in which each discipline retains its integrity and yet is radically open to the discoveries and insights of the other."[5]

The ideal is well expressed; the reality is still to be achieved. We search for intellectual wholeness, integrity, a single vision which encompasses both scientific and religious views. Then indeed we could hope for excellence.

Often our religious views are based on a pre-Copernican, pre-Darwinian, pre-Freud, pre-Einstein, pre-Watson/Crick view of the world and of humanity, and with these religious concepts and imagery we are trying to understand life in a world of biotechnology, computers, telecommunications, satellites, and molecular neuroscience. It reminds me of the triumphant announcement made by the Soviet cosmonaut, Yuri Gagarin, when he returned from his historical orbit, that he had disproved the existence of God. He told the reporters that he had been up there, and he had looked all around, and he didn't see God. I thought, how poignant that the quintessential 20th century man seemed to be searching for the quintessence, a pre-16th century notion that heaven was up, and a Michelangelo picture of God, the old man with the beard, reaching down from his cloud. One part of Gagarin's intellectual development was at the frontiers of science and technology, and the other part held a medieval world view.

Many of us are conscious of this kind of dissonance when we say the creed, with its pre-Copernican imagery of Jesus ascending and descending, a cosmos divided into heaven and earth, a pre-evolutionary view of creation and biology. The creed was written for the first Council of Nicea in A.D. 325 and revised by the Council of Constantinople in 381. Theologians will know if it was meant literally in 381, but much of our understanding of it is more metaphorical than literal. We mentally translate between what we are saying and what it means. We pray in 4th century language while we live on the eve of the 21st.

How many of us are walking around with unsynchronized compartments in our intellectual life? These compartments don't enrich each other if our spiritual and scientific world views are literally incongruous. We need to express our faith in contemporary terms well enough to hold our knowledge in the grasp of our values.

This is the great challenge that the sciences and technology present. The challenge is the same for the Catholic scientist as it is for the colleague from another discipline. It is to inform the Catholic vision with the scientific vision, and vice versa. It is a challenge which requires effort from all of us. Scientists must conduct investigations in a way that respects religious values. We must try to learn how to apply moral standards to developments that were not even anticipated when the traditional ethical guidelines were worked out. We need to be sensitive to the potential applications and implications of our discoveries. As Frederick Ferre' observed "The technosphere is morally charged." Our work is subject to ethical assessment.

Those who are not scientists must make a serious effort to understand what the scientists have learned, helping us understand its spiritual significance and how new discoveries fit into the broader framework. We need to recognize the differences in our modes of thought and seek ways to bring our conclusions into harmony.

Fr. Walter Ong, whom we honor today, recognized in a recent paper "a parable of yeast." He observed that yeast is kept alive by being brought into contact with new materials, and then it continues to grow and leavens the new mass.

Perhaps the first serious scientific challenge to traditional Catholic thinking began with the suggestion of Copernicus that the earth was not the center of the universe and that the Ptolemaic cosmology was wrong. Then Galileo presented evidence that the heavens were not perfect, were not limited to those planets and stars that we could see with the human eye, and that the earth was a planet like other planets. Because all of biology, physics, and chemistry were tied to the Ptolemaic cosmology, these new discoveries caused a major upheaval in scientific thought. Because our understanding of the human person and our relationship to God was also tied to that cosmology, these new thoughts became a religious threat.

How did Catholic thought respond to these new ideas? At first, with opposition. The theory of motion proposed by Copernicus was condemned by a decree of the *Index* in 1616. Galileo was forbidden to teach and placed on house arrest in 1632. His observations challenged the literal interpretation of scriptures and the centrality of humanity in the universe. Pietro Redondi recently speculated that Galileo's atomism brought new perspectives to the understanding of light, color, smell, and taste which challenged scholastic explanations of the transubstantiation of the eucharist. Redondi has described the discussions between those concerned with theological issues and those concerned with mathematics and cosmology as a "dialogue among the deaf."[6] Neither could hear what the other said, and the questions and answers did not relate. The clash between scientific discoveries and traditional church teaching was deep and diametric.

Eventually, the church accepted the solar system and the atomic theory. From the safe distance of a few centuries, the fear of these ideas has disappeared. Recently, in September, 1989, Pope John Paul II addressed the University of Pisa and acknowledged the greatness of Galileo. But we still use the Ptolemaic imagery in our textbooks and our prayers and have not replaced it with new imagery that would do justice to the grandeur of creation.

Before we get too critical of the church, remember that the daily newspaper still reports every day the time of sunrise and sunset although we know the sun does not orbit the earth, and people faithfully read their horo-

scopes which are based on the zodiac, which is the path through which the sun supposedly circles the earth. It's easier to acquire knowledge than it is to fully assimilate it.

Biology began with attempts to explain phenomena based on careful observation of the structure and behavior of living organisms. Early biology was primarily descriptive. However, it was recognized that if you wanted to learn about the working of a human body you could learn a great deal by dissecting a dog or a frog, but the leap to recognition of the relationship of dogs and frogs to human beings was not easy. Darwin's great synthesis of observations and introspection in the 19th century brought the recognition of evolution.

How did Catholic thought respond? At first with opposition. Darwin's *Origin of Species* was placed on the *Index*. Literal versions of Adam and Eve in the Garden were defended. Buffon was threatened with excommunication. But eventually, the church accepted the past, and now from the safe distance of over 100 years, the opposition to the theory of evolution has largely disappeared.

Evolution brought us a different view of the origins of human beings and a different, wonderful view of God. The creation is no longer something that happened a few thousand years ago; we are still evolving; the creation is still going on. We have a past as well as a present, and the future will not be the same as either of them. Evolution suggests that human nature is not static. It is changing over time, and our knowledge of it is changing as well. This dynamic view of an evolving nature with a genetic link to the pre-human past and biological mechanisms for continuing change has implications for the Catholic concept of natural law. I believe that we have not yet fully appreciated the implications of an evolving humanity.

The theory of evolution also recognizes that human beings are part of the organic kingdom and part of the interaction between environment and organism. We are part of a food chain, of energy and mineral and water cycles, part of the biosphere. How does Catholic thought respond? This has implications for Catholic teaching on the relationship between human beings and the rest of the universe. We move from a separatist perspective of dominion over creation to a participant's recognition of our stewardship of the earth. Pollution is not just messy; it's wrong. Handling of nuclear waste is not just a management problem; it's a moral issue. The Catholic perspective of the value of life and our responsibility to protect creation enriches the scientific realization of the ecosphere.

In physics, our knowledge has multiplied. We no longer see the universe in terms of the heavens and the earth. We see stars and planets, cold dark matter, galaxies, superclusters, and black holes. As I am not a physicist, my understanding of this is very limited. The phrase "in the beginning" brings images of "the big bang" of 15 to 20 billion years ago, or perhaps to thinking about a steady state system without any identifiable boundary in space or time in which creation is very hard to describe. We have moved from Newton's mechanistic world to a probabilistic one, to chaos theory. How does Catholic thought respond? It's too soon to say. We are in the midst of this discussion.

Hawking relates a chilling story about an experience in 1981 at a conference on cosmology at the Vatican. He writes: "At the end of the conference the participants were granted an audience with the pope. He told us that it was all right to study the evolution of the universe after the big bang, but we should not inquire into the big bang itself because that was the moment of Creation and therefore the work of God."[7] I hope that this conversation was not remembered accurately. It has been widely discussed because of the popularity of the book, but I do not know of any church statements about the big bang hypothesis, nor do scientists agree about the scientific validity of the hypothesis.

I prefer Father Ong's parable, and his observation:

> The dough in which the yeast of the Kingdom is planted is an immeasurably greater mass of immeasurable greater age than we used to think .... When we think of God as creator of the world or universe, at least in our pastoral (including liturgical), homiletic and devotional life, it appears that we are still most likely to think of the world in pretty archaic terms. What we see around us is accommodated directly to the ordinary human senses and imagination, that is, the visible earth and what surrounds it, the sun and moon and planets and stars as they appear to the unaided eye, a world full of beauty and wonder, but constituting not one billionth of what everyone now knows the universe that God created really is .... Paul tells us (Rom 1:20) that we learn of God's grandeur from 'the things He has made.' But now that we have found out so much more about what these things really are, in our actual living of the faith we have yet to learn from them. We need to bring present knowledge of the actual universe to bear on such things as our thinking of God's creative act, of the life and life expectancy of the church, of eschatological time, of the Incarnation and the Second Coming, and so much else. The yeast that is the Kingdom has a great deal to engage itself with here.[8]

One of the joys of being at Saint Louis University is the presence of Father Ong, whose vision of Catholic intellectual life is not daunted by scientific knowledge, but is rather excited by adventures of the mind, and who sees the efforts of scientists as catalytic for the growth of the church.

In the past 25 to 35 years, we have begun to deeply understand the way in which the human body functions and reproduces. In 1956 Watson and Crick proposed that the blueprints for development are in code in the sequence of polydeoxynucleotide base pairs in the nucleic acid of the chromosomes. It is information, not matter, that counts. Materialism falls before information theory. In 1962, Kornberg found that the DNA molecule, the molecule that can direct its own replication, can be synthesized. Steward showed that any cell in a plant—not just the egg or the sperm—ANY cell can be cultured to form a whole new individual. Reproductive cells are not unique in their reproductive capacity. Fertilization and development are no longer secret and mysterious. We understand the process and develop technologies around it. The first kidney transplant was 32 years ago; Christian Barnard first transplanted a heart from human to human 24 years ago. Louise Brown is 12 years old. We can transfer genes into cells and have transferred genes into human cells within the past year. We can grow human tissues in a petri dish. We are decoding the human genome.

These are exciting opportunities, but they pose challenges to us to grasp the meaning and potential uses of this information. These new developments look like steamboats to a shaky raft. We are technologizing natural processes.

How does Catholic thought respond? Again, often with opposition. Reactions have been largely based on traditional teachings. There have certainly been words of caution. Pius XII warned against in vitro fertilization in 1951, long before it was attempted in humans.[9] In the early 1970's there was literature about preembryonic interventions. Pope John Paul II recently observed, "As to the study of human life, we are all aware of the admirable progress made in biology and bioengineering, but we are also aware of the dangers inherent in rash experimentation which involves unacceptable forms of manipulation and alteration.[10]

Despite the popular images of Frankenstein and Dr. Strangelove, and acknowledging that scientists can be as arrogant, ambitious, and venal as anybody else, I would not like to see scientific work characterized as rash. Great caution has been observed. Scientists have themselves in the recent past called moratoria on research until guidelines were developed. There was a moratorium on genetic engineering and a moratorium on fetal research.[11] The scientific community has worked with the government on commissions controlling and limiting research to try to assure ethical standards of experimentation.[12] Not all the conclusions of these groups have been acceptable to Catholics, but the genuine efforts to proceed with caution and care question a characterization of scientists as rash or insensitive to human dignity.

Institutions carefully monitor and screen research proposals through institutional review boards, human subjects committees, and hospital ethics committees. Scientific work is complex and, unfortunately, poorly understood by the nonscientist. Yet, as Fr. Timothy Healy recently observed, American Catholic university medical scientists were not even consulted in the formulation of the recent Vatican statement on in vitro fertilization.[13] I believe that scientists must contribute to the discussion about the morality of scientific experimentation, and that philosophers and theologians should encourage exchanges of view.

There are such exchanges in places like the Center for Bioethics of the Kennedy Institute at Georgetown; the Institute of Society, Ethics and the Life Sciences of the Hastings Center; the Center for Health Care Ethics at Saint Louis University; the Institute for the Theological Encounter with Science and Technology, ITEST, also centered at Saint Louis University, and on many university campuses. I do expect that eventually the options and insights developed by molecular and cell biology, like the solar system, the atomic theory, evolution, ecology, psychology, and cosmology, will become part of the Catholic intellectual vision.

Scientific ideas are so powerful, and have such great significance for intellectual life. To not incorporate them into Catholic intellectual schema is to leave part of our minds in another century. I am concerned about the role of science and the scientist in Catholic intellectual life. Most of the faculty of Catholic universities were educated primarily in the humanities, and science is not an important part of their vision. Because of the paucity of Catholic scientists, many of the finest scientists of our faculties are not Catholic and have limited understanding of the Catholic intellectual tradition. We aren't teaching much science to nonscientists in our core curricula, usually only one or two-year sequences. Most of our science majors are pre-med, and we aren't producing significant numbers of scientists.

John Miller of the Public Opinion Lab estimated in 1985 that only 5% of American adults were scientifically literate. He thought that the attentive public, those that would read an article or listen to a newscast on a scientific topic, was 18%. However, these people would not be able to understand the development on their own and would have to have it explained to them by the journalist or commentator. They are vulnerable to the most persuasive speaker. Last year only 15% of American high school graduates took a physics course, and only 30% had taken chemistry. As many as 45% never took algebra.

As Jacob Bronowski observed, "The civilized world is, indeed, threatened with destruction by the physical impact of science on our lives .... What threatens us ... is not the scientific discovery, but our own failure to weigh all the consequences honestly and without compromise."[14] The limited public understanding of science makes it unlikely that we can weigh the consequences well. Decisions may be made with the guidance of an

astrologer or on the basis of the political party of the person presenting a proposal or because of a band wagon sent rolling by someone with limited knowledge rather than any real understanding of a science-related issue.

I am concerned about the extent to which scientific illiteracy may affect the Catholic world view. If Catholics do not understand scientific concepts and information, how can they provide insight to the moral implications of today's scientific work? The old worn words we continue to hear were written for an earlier level of knowledge. Sometimes they still fit, and we gain strength from them. Sometimes they seem hopelessly inadequate. We are prudent to be cautious about these developments. We want to follow John Paul II's emphasis on "the priority of the ethical over the technical, of the primacy of the person over things, of the superiority of the spirit over matter."[15] However, Catholic intellectuals cannot wait this out, hoping for the distance of 100 years to understand these discoveries well enough to respond to the moral issues. The advance of knowledge is too rapid and the investigations too sensitive. Scientists need to engage in serious discussion with their colleagues in philosophy, theology, and other disciplines to reach together an understanding of the nature of life and the cosmos, an understanding compatible with contemporary biology, chemistry, and physics, open to new ideas and supported by meaningful ethical and spiritual teaching.

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3. Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Times* (Toronto: Bantam, 1988).

4. J. . Bronowski, *A Sense of the Future* (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1977).

5. John Paul II, "The Links between Science and Faith" *Origins* 19:337.

6. Pietro Redondi, *Galileo: Heretic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

7. Hawking.

8. Walter Ong, SJ, "Yeast: A Parable for Catholic Higher Education" *America* 162 (April 7, 1990):347.

9. Hawking.

10. John Paul II.

11. "Recombinant DNA: From the Moratorium to Patenting Life" *The Hastings Center Report* 10 (1980): 10; alos "Reports to the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects" *The Hastings Center Report* 5 (1975): 11.

12. Leroy Walters, "Human In Vitro Fertilization: A Review of the Ethical Literature" *The Hastings Center Report* 9 (1979): 23; also "Reports . . . Protection of Human Subjects" above.

13. Timothy S. Healy, SJ, "Probity and Freedom on the Border: Learning and Belief in the Catholic University" *America* 163 (July 7, 1990): 5.

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# Theological Excellence in the Catholic University

Mary Collins, OSB

The community of scholars involved in the theological enterprise enjoys a firm consensus within the church that its task is to mediate between Christian faith and culture, although there are differing opinions in the church community about how that mediation is to be effected.[1] Catholic colleges and universities in the United States have made a commitment to participate in the theological enterprise as part of their mission. We appoint faculties with specializations in theological disciplines; we set out courses of study for undergraduates, and in a limited number of our institutions we prepare doctoral students for research and teaching as professional theologians.

This conference invites us to assess our efforts. Have we made a commitment to intellectual excellence in the conduct of the theological enterprise in our institutions? By what criteria would we measure such a commitment? What obstacles are we facing in making this commitment to excellence? I offer you my perspective as the basis for our common reflection.

## *IDENTIFYING THE CHALLENGE*

Intellectual excellence, personal or institutional, presumes rich gifts of intellect. But such natural talent is not enough; it must be cultivated. In the past two years I have been engaged in a collaborative research project in "Women Religious and the Intellectual Life," and the project has become the occasion for considering what habits of mind characterize "the intellectual" by way of contrast with ordinary minds that readily inculcate what has been called "other people's knowledge." Our investigator came up with a composite profile. The intellectual shows:

—playfulness of mind and delight in ideas
—a perception of the importance of ideas
—a critically detached relationship to society in the search for larger meanings
—and commitment to disciplined, non-utilitarian work

The obvious difference between the intellectual dilettante and the intellectual capable of excellent achievement in the mediation between Christian faith and culture is firm grasp of the historical tradition and the research tools and interpretative skills adequate to the inquiry being undertaken. The habits of entertaining adventuresome hypotheses and asking lots of questions yield little of themselves; the inquirer must be prepared to identify, interpret, and evaluate pertinent data. That takes both leisure and discipline. An academic institution is assumed to provide for both of these.

Yet the opinion has been voiced that the contemporary American academic institution is an unfavorable setting for intellectual excellence in any field, because our approach to education is profoundly utilitarian and market-driven. The jeopardy is doubled when one proposes a commitment to excellence in the intellectual enterprise that is Catholic theology. For despite repeated assertions within the community of Catholic teachers episcopal and academic that there can be no contradiction between faith and reason, when the intellectual inquirer identifies a profound tension, the historical record shows it is ecclesiastical authority and not faith-filled reason that inevitably controls the engagement. In the interests of avoiding such crises in the ecclesiastical *agora*, even Catholic theology can become utilitarian.

Alert to the problems signaled by such judgments, it is still worth pursuing the question of the conditions for the possibility of achieving intellectual excellence in the theological disciplines within our Catholic institutions of higher education. Many of you are aware of Matthew Lamb's *America* article in May, 1990, in which he gives a bleak reading of the prospect for the survival among us of an authentically Catholic theology—much less prospects for excellence.[2]

He tells of a generation of bright Catholic women and men taking up doctoral studies in the theological disciplines at Harvard, Yale, and the University of Chicago, where professors who excel in their knowledge of the

*Sister Mary Collins is chair of the Department of Religion and Religious Education at the Catholic University of America.*

Catholic tradition are extremely few. Why these institutions and not ours? In the absence of any firm data, we can only guess. Money perhaps? But Notre Dame has money. Do these students judge that intellectual excellence is more likely to be found in faculties that they perceive—however naively—to be doing wholly disinterested research unencumbered by constraints of any kind. Do they expect to find more competent and dedicated mentors? Will they have wider academic resources on which to draw? Will they have more rigorous intellectual demands placed on them?

Lamb has reason to raise questions about a post-conciliar generation of doctoral students being prepared to mediate between Christian faith and culture without any disciplined study of the historical Catholic tradition of Christian faith. You and I face the problem of which he writes when we make new faculty appointments in our departments of theology and religion. In our interviews we sit at the table with promising scholars whose knowledge of and interest in the Catholic theological tradition is not much greater than that of the undergraduates we want them to teach. We find them attractive as potential faculty colleagues. But we wonder: Is this the appointment that will best support our mission to our undergraduates? Is this young scholar likely to do excellent research that contributes to authentic understanding and interpretation of the Catholic tradition?

Lamb wonders about the doctoral students who do not elect to study with our faculties. But what of those who do? Do we aspire to intellectual excellence both for ourselves and for them in this work of mediating between Christian faith and culture? Who are our current doctoral students? Who are our undergraduates, the young women and men who constitute a large part of the pool from whom we will draw for our theological faculties in the next century?

## *UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES*

Let us begin with our undergraduates. Complex historical circumstances have produced a generation of 18 to 25 year old Catholics who come to us generally ignorant of or narrowly informed about the rich Catholic tradition of Christian faith. That void is only the beginning of our challenge. Whatever "playfulness of mind and delight in ideas" can be found among them, it is seldom focused on religious questions. They may be pious, agnostic, or alienated; but however their early lives have shaped them, understanding the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* is not a problem that consumes many of them in late adolescence. The pious may want to learn conventional answers to conventional questions about the Catholic tradition, but few of the pious are ready to probe either the importance of conventional questions or the meaning of conventional answers.

The agnostics and the alienated have typically detached themselves from all religious questions. But this does not mean that they have achieved the intellectual's "critically detached relationship" to culture and institutions in the search for larger meanings—least of all to the American culture in which they live. Our students have invested themselves in the American dream; and they count a degree from us as part of the investment. Within a one, two, three, or four course distribution requirement in theology or religious studies, can Catholic colleges and universities aspire to intellectual excellence for their pious, agnostic, or alienated undergraduates?

In designing an undergraduate curriculum, we intent to respond to their needs. But what is that need? Scripture? Christology? An introduction to theology? Do our undergraduates need to look at the God question as a cultural question? Do they need to understand the church as the community of salvation? Do they need to know Catholic teaching on pressing moral issues? What about their need to know Catholic traditions of prayer: liturgy and *lectio divina*, popular devotions and mystical contemplation? Do they need to understand how Christianity distinguishes itself from other world religions—to make the journey into another viewpoint so that they can return home with insight? Do they need to understand and admire great Catholic figures—the poets, mystics, teachers, and scholars? What content, explored in what sequences of courses, will give them access to authentic understanding of the Catholic tradition of Christian faith?

A sense of order would suggest the judgment that we need to begin at the beginning. But locating the beginning for our liberal arts undergraduate curriculum is just what is at issue. St. Augustine told North African catechists that what was necessary at the beginning for the inquirer into Christian faith was a presentation of the whole narrative of salvation. Other bishops contemporary with Augustine provided the newly baptized with an exposition of the Christian mystery liturgically celebrated. But the ministries of catechists and mystagogue have traditionally been distinct from the ministry of the teacher in the Christian community. And we claim to be in the teaching ministry, in continuity with the activity of an Origen or a Tertullian, mediating between Christian faith and culture.

What is a sound starting point for the Catholic college or university professor of young adults poorly informed about religion and its institutions? Our theological tradition tells us there is only one mystery to be grasped, the mystery of salvation in the divine-human communion of love. Our faith says Christ is the center as well as Alpha and Omega of that mystery of salvation. But our communal tradition is filled with many diverse witnesses to historical faith in this one mystery of salvation: textual and non-textual, official, communal, structural, popular, and personal. On the other hand, our present historical situation is filled with contrast experiences of persons, movements, events, structures that promise

salvation and deliver destruction and oppression. What do our undergraduates need to learn from the theology or religion department?

Twenty years of undergraduate teaching and administration confirm my conviction that we must offer students the possibility of an intellectual understanding of those multiple witnesses to the historical tradition of Christian faith. For they are multiple. The Bible may be "the Great Code,"[3] but the biblical account of revelation has regularly been decoded and recoded, not only in the logically rigorous language of definition but also in the metaphorical and symbolical languages of ritual, drama, poetry, narrative or even the language of virtue and good deeds. If we concur with the theologian's judgment that all these expressions point to the one mystery, that they manifest the "analogy of faith," an intelligent and resourceful teaching faculty can move to the center from a wide range of starting points—starting points from within the Catholic tradition of Christian faith or even from particular cultural standpoints. The "move to the center" from any chosen starting point will inevitably involve some vigorous intellectual activity in the search for intelligibility, for grasping the truth within the Catholic tradition of Christian faith.

It is not self-evident to me, as a liturgiologist, that the texts of the Bible or of dogmatic theology have either a pedagogical or logical claim to priority in our effort to engage undergraduates intellectually in understanding the Catholic tradition of Christian faith. Theoretically, we can begin with virtually any data or issue which engages our students. Actually, the resources of each institution are limited, and we must work with the resources we have. In an undergraduate setting, whether in a college of arts and sciences or in professional schools, the academic challenge is to design a curriculum which is intellectually stimulating and demanding, not one which aims to touch everything, however lightly. If the limited number of carefully planned courses are intellectually stimulating, our students will learn some part of the technical languages of the Christian tradition in the course of their inquiry. But students will also be awakened to the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* in one of its many manifestations.

In our current climate, when some higher education reformers have reintroduced the call for a core curriculum to guarantee cultural literacy and others are demanding further diversification of the curriculum to promote an appreciation of cultural pluralism, religious studies and theology departments are being pressed to look at present curricula. Do we have a vision or a smorgasbord? If we have strayed, can we now agree on what is essential?

I am prepared to make the case for a curriculum that does not answer that question too narrowly.[4] As academic departments, we should not take on responsibility for religious formation which is not properly intellectual. Nor should we develop a curriculum that simply emulates the seminary tradition of dogmatic theology according to a schema of tracts. But neither should we pull back on our commitment to authentic theological reflection. Identifying central religious questions for critical inquiry is an imperative if we aspire to excellence in our work.

In summary, our departmental task is to bring undergraduate students to serious intellectual engagement with some part of the Catholic tradition of Christian faith, to lead them to understand the intelligibility of some significant aspect of or moment in the tradition. Even for our doctoral students or our faculties, it is an impossible pretention to claim intellectual comprehension of the truth of all expression of the tradition. But if we enable undergraduates to understand something well, to discover its truth and intelligibility for their own time and place, if we help them to discover the compatibility of faith and reason, such understanding is pledge and promise to them that the whole of which they now understand a part may indeed express the truth of a great mystery. If we do this introductory work well—if, in fact, we aspire to excellence—students will leave us with more than an appropriate number of credits. They will have reason to trust the religious traditions even when these elude their immediate comprehension; and they will also have the confidence to continue the search for understanding both the Catholic tradition of Christian faith and the religious languages of other peoples. Some among them may chose to become theologians.

## *DOCTORAL STUDIES*

Matthew Lamb's question about the suitable setting for preparing a next generation of Catholic theologians for intellectual excellence—our institutions or "theirs"—raises different questions. If we say "ours" we have yet to consider what that involves. Some in our ecclesial communion judge that the task of Catholic theologians is to be direct agents of the official magisterium, pursuing the agenda which is set by ecclesiastical authority. Others see a wider purpose in theological reflection; they draw their agendas from the life of the ecclesial community or even from the marketplace. This issue and perceptions of how it has been resolved in particular settings is undoubtedly a significant factor for aspiring Catholic theologians making decisions about where they will pursue doctoral studies. Who sets the agenda for religious and theological studies in Catholic colleges and universities?

The academic setting within which most Catholic theology and religious studies faculties work suggest a broad answer to the question. The original site at The Catholic University of America for pursuing the PhD degree in the Catholic tradition of Christian faith, the Department of Religion and Religious Education, had its origins in the School of Arts and Sciences; and this

organizational structure promoted the awareness that it is the whole university that provides resources for the theological enterprise. The department's present interdisciplinary commitment was foreshadowed in its founding by John Montgomery Cooper, a priest who was also the founding chair of the Department of Anthropology. Institutional reorganization at Catholic University in the 1970s uprooted the department from its arts and sciences home and transplanted it into a newly constituted School of Religious Studies. Two decades later, the institutional consequences of that move are in evidence. We have a new generation of university faculty and administrators who, on the basis of this structural arrangement, too often view the enterprise of theological reflection as a world apart from their own academic interests and intellectual agendas.

Fortunately, we continue to attract intellectually gifted doctoral students with a broader—if not always clearer—perspective. In the initial interview many regularly announce that their interest is "not theology." Rather, they want to do a doctorate in exploring the relationship between "religion and culture." Often enough they are surprised to learn that we consider critical understanding of the historical tradition of Christian faith and knowledge of theological method to be integral to all disciplined study of religion and culture at CUA. Their surprise is grounded in the perception that doing theology is something distinct from systematic reflection on the relationship between religious faith and culture. This is not our departmental understanding.

Fourteen out of sixteen regular faculty earned their doctoral degrees in some theological specialization. Yet all our faculty have subsequently developed interdisciplinary research interests and methods in their own areas of theological specialization. Its own professional development has let the faculty to the conviction that while our doctoral students are working with us, they need to have access to the wider university. It is the whole university faculty, not simply its theologians, that provides the challenge for intellectual excellence in the theological enterprise.

Minimally, the faculty of a research university affords our students wide access to the cognate research tools and skills essential for the theological enterprise. But it also gives doctoral students intelligent and generally disinterested conversation partners who will sharpen and focus their inquiry. Doctoral students doing Catholic theology need to have access to experts in scripture, dogma, and institutional history. But they also need to be in conversation with anthropologists and musicologists, philosophers, historians, sociologists and psychologists, political and economic theorists, physicists and biologists, classicists, linguists, statisticians and lawyers as they learn to formulate their research questions and develop appropriate research methods and skills. It is presumptuous to aspire to mediate between faith and culture without a disciplined understanding of some aspects of human culture.

Study of the doctrinal and dogmatic traditions is a necessary part of the theological enterprise, but it is propaedeutic to excellent constructive theological reflection on the relationship between faith and culture. I do not think any academic institution, whether divinity school, theological institute, or university department—"theirs" or "ours"--can prepare doctoral students adequately to take up the work of theological reflection without drawing on the resources of a full university faculty. But doctoral students preparing to mediate between the Catholic tradition of Christian faith and culture need a distinctive kind of university faculty.

What kind? If we aspire to intellectual excellence for our doctoral students, it is indispensable that they have the opportunity to associate with a research faculty who have catholic sensibilities as well as an appreciation for and knowledge of past and present expressions of the Catholic tradition of Christian faith. Without this larger context, we are working against the odds in trying to prepare a next generation of Catholic theologians. But just as surely, there will be not intellectually excellent Catholic colleges or universities in the next century unless the theological reflection happening in our theology and religious studies departments now impinges on the intellectual life of the whole institution.

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1. International Theological Commission, "On the Interpretation of Dogma," *Status Quaestionis*, in *Origins* 20:1 (May 17, 1990), 1, 3-5.

2. Matthew Lamb, "Will There Be Catholic Theology in the United States?" *America*, May 26, 1990, 523ff.

3. Northrup Frye, *The Great Code* (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1982).

4. For a record of recent professional discussion, see the 1987 annual publication of the College Theology Society, *Theology and the University*, ed., John Apczynski; *Liberal Learning and the Religion Major*: A Report to the Profession, Stephen D. Crites. The American Academy of Religion Task Force for the American Association of Colleges. 1990.

# Response Upon Reception of the 1991 Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, CSC, Award

Walter J. Ong, SJ

Needless to say, I am deeply honored by this award from the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities and am especially honored because of the person after whom the award has so fittingly been named. It is perhaps worth noting that this is the second time I am indebted to Father Hesburgh for an award, the first being in 1982, when he placed the hood on me conferring the honorary LL.D. (Doctor of Laws) at the commencement ceremonies of the University of Notre Dame. So all of you will, I hope, understand when I say that I do feel, if not deserving, at least somewhat in context here.

In expressing my gratitude for this award, I should like to reflect on what should be a commonplace, namely, that American Catholic higher education has been and is something special in the life of the church. Our network of American colleges and universities has been a unique achievement. No nation in history has ever had a comparable number of Catholic institutions of higher learning. And this at a time when the vastness of knowledge, activated or stored for retrieval, which confronts human beings and with which higher education has to deal is certainly billions of times greater than it has been in the not too distant past—insofar as we can in some loose way quantify so awesome a possession as knowledge.

In our day American Catholic universities and colleges have more and more programmatically involved themselves with growing intensity in all the arts and sciences and professions—not to mention sports, which we must prudently remember were integral to the ancient Greek *paideia*. Our universities and colleges have also dedicated themselves more and more to the connection between faith and justice explicitly treated by the Second Vatican Council as central to the Judeo-Christian tradition. Indeed, such dedication well preceded, and prepared for, Vatican II. I myself recall, as an example geographically close to me, the pioneering academic developments in social service spearheaded by Father Joseph C. Husslein, SJ, at Saint Louis University in the 1930s, and before that at Fordham University. We all recall similar figures, such as Monsignor John A. Ryan and others, but not so many before Vatican II as after.

Although American Catholic colleges and universities are today undergoing various crises, the situation of the church vis-a-vis the rest of the world is in some notable ways stronger now than ever in our past, largely because of the work and attitudes of mind which developed in Catholic universities and colleges. One way in which the church's situation is stronger is that the church has what we may call a higher secular validity than she ever enjoyed before. Today the secular world listens to what the Roman Catholic Church has to say, what individual Catholics as Catholics have to say, and what Catholic higher educational institutions have to say more attentively than it did in the past. The secular world may often disagree with us. It remains the secular world, not always friendly to the Christian faith, sometimes openly hostile, but more attentive to that faith than it used to be. One reason, I believe, is that, largely through the effects of Catholic higher education, we ourselves have begun to talk more to the whole world around us. Our earlier isolation was partly, though by no means entirely, our own fault. Even in addressing others, we were often employing a not entirely modern idiom so that in fact we were talking mostly to ourselves. The improvement of our idiom has grown largely out of our college and university work and the necessary breadth of the questions which this work must address.

Today more than ever American Catholic higher education is a frontier where the church meets the world and the world meets the church. Our higher education is a means of inculturation. When we talk of inculturation today, as we so often do, we are likely to think of it as applying specifically to cultures in the so-called Third World. Europeans brought to lands new to them *the* faith, pure and noninculturated. But the Catholic faith that Europeans brought to other peoples was a Catholic faith inculturated in Europe and European institutions. This was the only way the Europeans had known the faith or could know it.

*Father Ong is Emeritus Professor of Humanities at Saint Louis University.*

Inculturation the church must always have, for the Son of God became incarnate not in a set of abstractions but at a particular time and place in human history. There never has been and cannot be a Catholicism that is not inculturated. Belloc's once famous statement. "The church is Europe: and Europe is the church," today sounds not only chauvinistically provincial but also totally disabling to the church's mission.

Inculturation in any given human society is of course not without dangers. For the church is not the secular world and the secular world is not the church nor readily convertible into the church. Conversion has a special meaning in Christian theology. It is a grace given by God, not by any human institution. Yet the faith and the secular have to meet and to coexist in the ways the histories of various peoples make possible. They must meet in an intensive way in our universities and colleges. Inculturation is not always easy. It has given us many martyrs, and many in our own day, such as, in El Salvador, Archbishop Oscar Romero or the six Jesuits and their housekeeper and her daughter gunned down by the military. We can be happy and reassured of the effectiveness of our mission by the concern for such martyrs shown on our campuses.

Catholics have not, of course, always managed this meeting of faith and secular culture perfectly. In an article, "Faith and Fiction," in the recent Volume 9 of the *CCICA Bulletin* (1990: 49-52), published by the Catholic Commission on Intellectual and Cultural Affairs, Anita Gandolfo has noted that "prior to Vatican II, the term 'Catholic novel' was most often invoked in defense of a didactic fiction employed primarily to catechize and discipline the faithful." Catholic fiction meant fiction with a "parochial purpose," largely for persons who were unable to manage such things as Thomas Merton's statement that reading James Joyce was a factor in his conversion to the Catholic Church (57). Since Vatican II, and indeed well before this council, Catholic higher educational institutions have helped move Catholic consciousness well beyond this position. Our powers of aesthetic digestion have improved. And so have other inculturating powers.

It is or should be axiomatic that at any given time this world is as much God's world as it ever has been. What is going on today in such developments as computers, voyages to outer space, the global information society, the tremendous growth of knowledge in the physical sciences and, as I seriously believe, the even greater growth of knowledge in the humanities (we must remember that the entire history of science is part, not of science, but of the humanities)—all these and countless other developments around us represent stages in the evolving universe which God created and with which he is concerned, and indeed is involved through the Incarnation, as much today as he has ever been in the past. Such impressive new developments in our world should not be waived off patronizingly as unaccountable "marvels of modern science," astonishing, but somehow theologically irrelevant. They are quite normal developments in the 15-billion-year-old universe that God created and that has been, is, and will continue to be entirely under God's providence. God created a world that, from the start, was headed into the production of computers and all the rest. We must continue to inculturate the faith in God's real world such as he has given us in these latter days to know it, with all its vast potentials, keeping aware meanwhile, of course, that many new developments can be used for good or for evil.

This is the great, encompassing challenge that lies ahead: the challenge of relating to the faith and to God's providence our growing knowledge of God's immense universe, of human beings' place in it, and of the meaning of the Incarnation in it. This challenge is inevitably felt in our Catholic colleges and universities more than in any other Catholic context. Some brave new starts have been made in further developing the Catholic tradition in newly requisite ways, but we have only begun.

As we work to continue what we have been doing in facing this and other challenges and opportunities before us, one recurrent question is and will be: Of the decisions open to American Catholic colleges and universities in the ways we relate to the Catholic faith all else around and in us, which are the decisions serving the greater glory of God? We recall that St. Ignatius of Loyola, born just 500 years ago this year, did not use the expression "for the greater glory of God" as a motto, such as one might inscribe at the top of a letter or paste onto something to shoot it off to God, prepaid, or perhaps even to advertise God's cause, as our media-conscious world might ambition. Ignatius's ordinary motto at the top of his letters was not "AMDG" (*ad majorem Dei gloriam*, to the greater glory of God) but rather the first three letters of the name of Jesus, *JES* or *IHS*. In the *Spiritual Exercises* and the *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* Ignatius uses "for the greater glory of God" not as a motto but as a recipe to be turned to when a decision is being faced—that is the reason for the comparative "greater," referring to a choice between alternatives. Facing a future full of difficult decisions, we must consider in each case which of the alternatives we might choose would make for God's greater glory—not for ours.

The decisions that confront us today are momentous, many of them intensified by the destabilization and the horrors brought on by the present war in the Middle East, but the decisions should not overwhelm us, for, we can thank God, we work in a living tradition which has faced difficult times without number before. We can look back with heartfelt gratitude to our predecessors in Catholic higher educational institutions, our devoted faculty and administrators and staff and students and benefactors, clerical and lay, women and men, both

Catholic and non-Catholic, who over the years have made their own difficult decisions and done the demanding work which has brought us to the point where we now corporately face our new challenges. Facing new challenges is a way of showing that we are alive.

**Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities**
**(A Department of NCEA)**
**Suite 650 One Dupont Circle Washington, D.C. 20036**

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One Dupont Circle, Suite 630
Washington, DC 20036

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